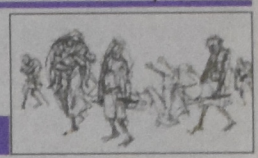
Dec 2003
REDEEMER COLLEGE LIBRARY
777 GARNER RD. E.
ANCASTER, ON L9K 1J4

CHRISTIAN COURIER

April 14, 2003 A Reformed Biweekly No.2713 $1.60

Meditations on the book of Genesis ..... p. 12

Ty Hofman examines faith healing ..... p. 18



58th year of publication

Christian relief agencies offer humanitarian help to Iraqis

REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LIBRARY
CHRISTIAN COURIER
PER/BX/9401/.C36
MAY 0 8 2003

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. – Many Christian relief agencies have condemned the U.S.-led war with Iraq as being unnecessary and a wrong choice. But even so, such agencies as Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC), World Vision and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) have been offering their services for humanitarian work in and around Iraq, especially for new refugees.

In late March, Jacob Kramer, CRWRC's international relief co-ordinator, traveled to Jordan to visit refugee camps and help plan for potential involvement in a co-ordinated response following the war with Iraq (see page 2 sidebar story). CRWRC is working in a camp on the border of Jordan and Iraq, where people from other countries who were living in Iraq are being offered shelter until they are able to find a more permanent refuge. The agency is working with other non-governmental organizations to provide food and shelter to Iraqi refugees and other displaced people.

"CRWRC is compelled to respond when people are in need regardless of the reasons for their poverty and distress, and regardless of the politics surrounding the situation," says CRWRC co-director Wayne deJong. "The people affected are mostly innocent bystanders, and we are in a position to provide physical help – and to show them the love of Christ."

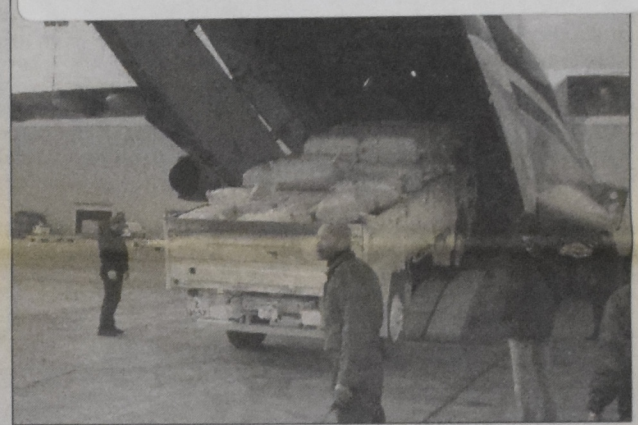
CRWRC has made connections to send trucks of food, hygiene items, and other emergency aid into Iraq with other agencies such as MCC.

According to the United Nations, the war could result in more than 1.4 million refugees and as many as two million internally displaced persons, reports CRWRC. Iraqi hospitals and clinics will run out of medicines within three or four weeks of the start of the conflict, warns the UN.

World Vision's response

World Vision International (WVI) has been very clear in its opposition to a unilateral war on Iraq. The agency also calls for sanctions against Iraq to be more limited because "Iraqi civilians should no longer be punished for the actions of their unelected leaders," according to a WVI policy statement released last December.

But as war intensifies, WVI is working on a humanitarian response and relief effort. On March 13 World Vision airlifted emergency relief supplies from its warehouse in Italy to Amman, Jordan, to prepare for a humanitarian response. The shipment included three 10-ton trucks and thousands of blankets, collapsible water containers and plastic sheets for use as temporary shelter. The agency estimates that at least 10,000 refugees will move into Jordan.



COURTESY WORLD VISION CANADA

World Vision food supplies flown in from Brindisi, Italy are unloaded in Amman, Jordan.

World Vision plans to work in conjunction with the Jordanian Red Crescent and Caritas Jordan to distribute relief supplies to Iraqi refugees. Remaining supplies would be held for relief operations inside Iraq. World Vision also plans to assist refugees fleeing to Syria, Iran and Turkey.

MCC already in Iraq

MCC already has staff working in Iraq (one employee) and Jordan, and has started its crisis response to the war. The agency has sent 11 12-metre containers of relief kits, canned meat, blankets and school kits to the Middle East, reports MCC. A second shipment of 19,200 cans of beef left Ontario in March and will arrive at the end of April.

In Iraq, MCC's aid will be distributed by the Islamic Relief Agency and CARE Iraq to internally displaced persons. In Jordan aid will be distributed by the Middle East Council of Churches to refugees fleeing the war.

MCC has worked in Iraq since 1991. In Iraq, "MCC seeks to serve in the midst of suffering, witness to the injustice of the 12-year sanctions and learn from the strengths of Iraqi people," explains the agency on its web site.

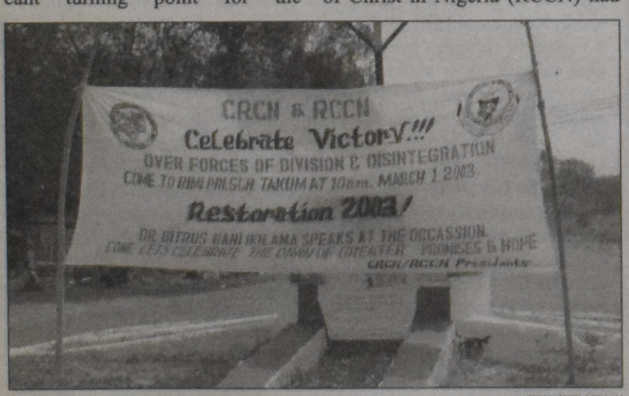
Since 1991 MCC has shipped more than $8.1 million in aid to Iraq, including food, school kits, medicine for children, blankets, quilts, relief kits, health kits, canned meat, medical textbooks, and hospital supplies. Most of the food has been shipped through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, including wheat flour, lentils and beans. MCC also supports a number of agriculture, education and health-related projects in Iraq and has had North American personnel

See AGENCIES page 2...

'Blessed are the peacemakers'

Adrian Helleman

TAKUM, Nigeria – The celebrations of Saturday, March 1, 2003, in Takum (Taraba State, Nigeria) certainly marked a significant turning point for the Reformed churches of Nigeria. Thirty years of separation and open conflict between the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN) and the Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria (RCCN) had come to an end. On this day reconciliation became a reality. It also meant reconciliation for the dominant tribal groups of these churches, the Jukun and Kuteb, respectively. Appropriately enough, the theme for the service was, "How good and pleasant it is for brothers to live together in unity" (Psalm 133.1-3).



ADRIAN HELLEMAN

A roadside sign announces reconciliation among Nigerian Reformed denominations.

The service of celebration was held not in a church building belonging to one of the denominations, but in the large open field of a primary school. And the prayers, speeches and songs of this day were marked by a spirit of confession and humble repentance for years of animosity, bitterness, and all the damage which resulted for families, congregations and communities. Both President Bahago of the CRCN and President Kukwen of the RCCN read

See **RECONCILIATION** *p. 3...*

News

Agencies ready to bring aid into Iraq

... continued from page 1

in Iraq since 1998.

Only a handful of North American non-governmental organizations like MCC currently work in Iraq. Consequently, a number of North American agencies and organizations have expressed interest in supporting MCC's efforts to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people. MCC is part of "All Our Children," an inter-denominational children's health initiative in Iraq.

Samaritan's Purse is also ready to enter Iraq with emergency relief supplies as soon as American military officials open secure zones for humanitarian assistance, reports the agency. Equipment and supplies are being collected in Amman, Jordan, for transportation into Iraq. Samaritan's Purse relief workers are also in Kuwait meeting with other humanitarian aid officials to assess the immediate needs in Iraq.

Spiritual and physical aid

"As Christians, we hate war; we favor peace and justice, but sometimes war is inevitable," says Sean Campbell, executive director of the agency's Canadian office. "As an organization, our objective is to provide spiritual and physical aid to the victims of this war as quickly and efficiently as possible."

Samaritan's Purse is preparing to distribute supplies in Iraq including:

- 5,000 Internally Displaced Persons Kits: including cookware, dish soap, eating/cooking utensils;
- 5,000 hygiene kits: toothbrushes, shampoo, soap, etc.;
- medical supplies for 100,000 people for three months;
- plastic sheeting enough for 7,000 families (for temporary shelter) and 2,000 blankets.

Aggravated humanitarian crisis

Several international church-related relief agencies are warning that the war may exacerbate a long-standing humanitarian crisis in the region.

The human toll of Iraq's recent history — international sanctions, the effects of the 1991 Gulf War and a protracted war between Iraq and Iran in the early 1980s — have "hardly penetrated the long noisy months of political and military news," said Jonathan Frerichs, a spokesperson for Lutheran World Relief (LWR), based in Baltimore, Maryland.

LWR is a member of a coalition of U.S. church groups and agencies taking part in a joint effort entitled "All Our Children" to raise funds for ongoing medical needs for Iraqi children.

U.S. church groups are also supporting efforts by the Action by Churches Together (ACT) International, a Geneva-based global alliance of churches and relief agencies.

COURTESY WORLD VISION CANADA

Refugee Yonis Adam, shown here at a refugee camp in Al' Ruwayshid, on the Jordan/Iraq border, left everything behind in Baghdad.

"It is not lost on many in the church that the best way to help the people in Iraq is multi-laterally through the humanitarian, Christian service and ecumenical connections that link mainline American churches to the Middle East and have done for decades," Frerichs told ENI.

ACT recently issued a warning that the military action could aggravate the humanitarian crisis in Iraq and affect neighboring countries such as Jordan, Syria, Iran, Turkey and Lebanon, where displaced persons will most likely seek refuge.

ACT is responding by coordinating efforts by the Middle East Council of Churches, Christian Aid, Norwegian Church Aid, the Lutheran World Federation and the Dutch-based InterChurch Organization for Development Cooperation/Kerkinactie.

Relief agencies affiliated to the biggest U.S. mainstream Protestant denominations also have long-standing contacts with Christian churches in the Middle East.

"Helping the people of Iraq, especially now, is something that congregations or groups within parishes across the U.S. are ready for and are beginning to support," said Frerichs.

Helping local ministries

Christian Aid Mission is working with indigenous churches and other evangelical ministries which are caring for refugees from Iraq. Families with small children are being given water, soap, diapers, milk and emergency food supplies. Many Christian families in Jordan, Syria and Turkey are taking Christian refugees into their homes so they won't have to go into the tent camps.

Christian Aid is responding as gifts are received to help the refugees, reports the agency. Refugees entering Jordan are being funneled into two major camps. One is for Iraqi nationals, the other is for nationals from other countries who may have been living in Iraq and are now fleeing for their lives. Christian ministries in Jordan have

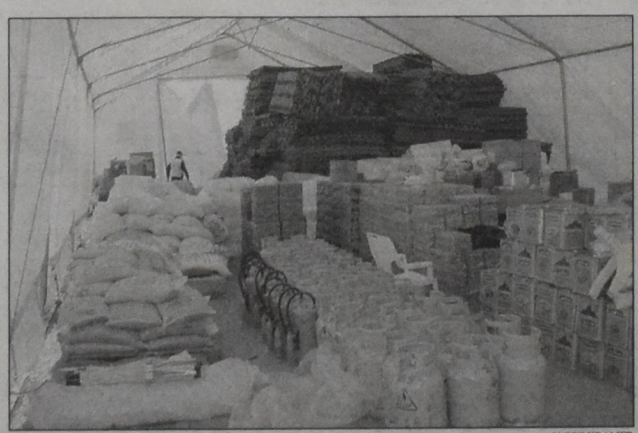
CRWRC worker visits Jordan refugee camp

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. – Twenty centimetres of snow was not what Jacob Kramer, CRWRC's international relief co-ordinator, expected to see when he traveled to Jordan in late March. But that's what he found.

Kramer was in Jordan for four days to visit a refugee camp near the Iraqi border, meet local leaders, assess the situation, and help decide how CRWRC will respond to the humanitarian crisis facing Iraq.

Kramer described the sudden snowfall as "amazing!" The weather was very unusual for the region, and Kramer saw 20 cars in ditches as a result.



JACOB KRAMER

Relief supplies from CRWRC await distribution.

Kicked out of Iraq

Working in Jordan, CRWRC is "involved with other organizations in a camp for third nations refugees – people kicked out of Iraq [who] have no place to go," explained Kramer in a phone call to *Christian Courier* from the Netherlands (shortly after leaving Jordan). These refugees are not native Iraqis but people from other countries, such as Sudan and Somalia, who fled to Iraq several years ago and are now forced to leave Iraq.

At the camp are "a lot of Sudanese," reported Kramer. "The Sudanese arriving in the camp are in terrible circumstances."

Two Sudanese men he spoke with left Sudan as "youngsters" and came to Iraq 10 years ago. But now, they and other Sudanese are being "kicked out of Iraq – that's what they tell me," said Kramer.

While in Iraq, Sudanese refugees endured an "extremely hard life of menial jobs with poor pay, living 13 people to a two-room apartment and discriminated against because of color," reported Kramer in a CRWRC press release. "And now they have to flee again, leaving behind what little they had but not able to return to their homeland. How wonderful it is to welcome these people, give them food to eat and a place to rest."

CRWRC is helping provide refugees with a temporary place to stay, but is not able to help them move to another country. Another agency – International Organization for Migrants – is doing that work, Kramer told CC. So far, only a trickle of refugees have arrived. One camp Kramer visited was set up to accommodate 5,000 people, but only 450 refugees were there so far.

What to do post-war?

"The second point of my trip was to talk to local contacts there," explained Kramer. With them, he discussed, "What can we do post-war? Do we have an existing organization in Baghdad . . . to help the suffering people?"

So far, most refugees from Iraq have been "third nations refugees." There have been some Iraqis, confirmed Kramer, "but until now, people are trying to stay where they are." Civilians were not targeted in the last Gulf War, so many Iraqis are staying put for now.

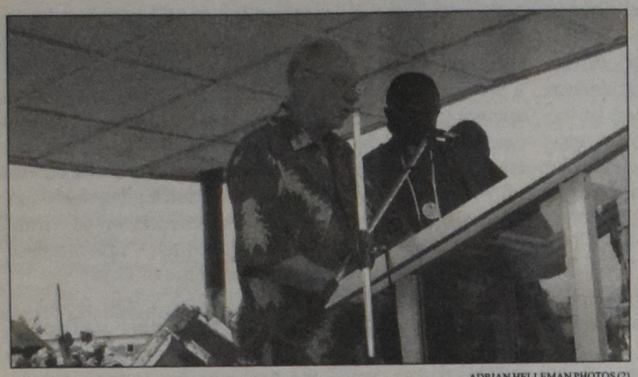
"It is mainly the fear factor which really gets large numbers of people moving," suggested Kramer. 'That fear is not in the people yet. . . . We don't see a big movement of people at this moment."

In anticipation of the end of the war, the World Food Program is requesting $1 billion in food aid for Iraq, reported Kramer. "That's the biggest request they've done in history."

CRWRC has been following the situation in the Iraq region for quite a long time, said Kramer, so four days was enough for him to visit Jordan, consult with people in the area, and assess the situation. He described traveling through the region as being like driving through Saskatchewan for three hours, without seeing any plants. The refugee camp he saw is "a dismal place," with tents pitched across the gravelly ground. While there were no sandstorms during his stay, there were a lot of high winds.

News

Reconciliation starts between Nigerian Reformed churches



ADRIAN HELLEMAN PHOTOS (2)

Dr. Henry Zwaanstra, a church historian, brought greetings on behalf of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

... continued from page 1

statements of reconcilation, and presented a joint declaration of mutual forgiveness and resolve for close co-operation in the future. They outlined the history of the crisis, and gave some indication of the kind of persistence needed to arrive at the present moment.

Three decades of separation

During the three decades of separation these denominations have gone their separate ways, and developed their own programs. In the interest of not allowing the preparatory process to drag on too long, it was determined that for the immediate future they would continue as separate denominations, but work together in areas such as evangelism, and co-operate on all levels to promote the kingdom of God and the unity of the church. From various indications it became clear that even now, significant elements within these churches are not ready to accept the initiatives of their leadership, so the presidents called on all who witnessed this gathering, as well as the wider world of Reformed churches, to take the events of the day seriously, and support reconciliation with their prayers.

The sermon for this celebration was delivered by Dr. Bitrus Gani Ikilaman, now living in Northern Nigeria, although his origins are in Takum. It is ironic that in Hausa his middle name 'Gani' means 'to see,' since he is totally blind. That did not prevent him from giving a powerful message for the occasion, beginning with Jesus' prayer in John 17:21, "that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you." He continued with a meditation on Ephesians 2:14, "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility."

His strongest challenge came with the final passage from Joshua 24, which he dubbed the 'renewal of the covenant at Takum.' After 30 years in the desert of destruction of families, churches and all kinds of properties, Bitrus recognized the critical opportunity now given by the Lord for renewal. Balaam will have no more opportunities to put a curse on the people. The Jordan of hostility and wastefulness has been crossed. The victory achieved was not of their own doing, however. And so came the challenge to fear the Lord, and serve him with all faithfulness, to throw away all idol-gods, to destroy the centres of wickedness, and rededicate themselves to worship God alone.

Recognizing the miracle

At times Bitrus found it difficult to speak due to emotion, as he recognized the miracle of what the Lord has done for the people of Taraba State, and Takum in particular. He recognized the history of violence that preceded this day. But he challenged his audience now to find a better reason to die: for faith in Jesus, not for tribe, money or political adherence. He charged them to follow Christ all the way, even if it should cost their lives. Indeed, Bitrus recognized that the churches are witnessing a revival that is already spreading, and challenged them to send out missionaries jointly once again, and allow the devil no foothold in their midst.

The day we prayed for

Representatives of a variety of groups including the Christian Reformed Church in North America (church historian Dr. Henry Zwaanstra), and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (Dr. Richard Van Houten) brought greetings. The governor of Taraba State added words of appreciation for this milestone achieved.

Over and over again we heard of the joy occasioned by this event, "This is the day for which we have prayed so long!" There were few illusions about the hard work still ahead. Long-standing grudges remain a threat, so the calls to prayer and fasting, vigilance, tolerance, forgiveness and love were not superfluous.

The service concluded with spirited singing of "A Mighty Fortress is our God." "Did we in our own strength confide, Our striving would be losing. Were not the right man on our side, The man of God's own choosing .... And though this world with devils filled, Should threaten to undo us, We will not fear, for God has willed his truth to triumph through us." At this point in the service, the words took on a new and precious meaning.

Afterwards, guests of the celebration were invited to a meal at the nearby central church of the RCCN.

It was wonderful for us to experience in such a concrete way the renewal now taking place in the churches in Nigeria. It was a very special day also for the Christian Reformed World Missions branch of the Sudan United Mission, which had brought the gospel into this part of Nigeria decades ago. What is now called Taraba State was the very place where CRC missionaries started mission work in Nigeria in the 1930s and '40s. They worked with a number of tribes, the majority of which were the Jukun and Kuteb, here in Nigeria's middle belt, not far from the Cameroon border. This work gave birth to a large intertribal Reformed denomination, the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria.

African clergy join in a dance at the reconciliation gathering.

Tribal rivalries still alive

In the early 1970s, after Nigeria became independent, serious tensions arose within this denomination, largely along tribal lines. The Kuteb felt that they were discriminated against when it came to positions in the church, and eventually pulled out, starting their own denomination, the Reformed Church of Christ in Nigeria (RCCN). The RCCN is almost exclusively Kuteb, while the CRCN is approximately 75 per cent Jukun, with a sprinkling of smaller tribes. Centuries ago the Jukun ruled large sections of central Nigeria, but today they are greatly reduced in power and influence. Tribal rivalries are still alive in Nigeria, and not long ago also led to a split in the Lutheran church in Nigeria.

In the late 1990s, the Jukun-Kuteb conflict become so intense that they burned each other's churches and headquarters, schools, and hospitals. The conflict was certainly not doctrinal, for the two churches are practically identical in teaching. Tribal loyalties gained the upper hand, resulting in large-scale violence. After the service of reconciliation we viewed some of the damage to buildings in the Takum area. Saddest of all was a large missionary hospital, totally destroyed. Yet signs of rebuilding, and hope for the future are noticeable everywhere. It was a joy for us to experience the work of God in reconciling brothers and sisters, as they are making a new beginning. If reunification is the ultimate goal, the churches have a long way to go. But what has been accomplished so far was certainly worth celebrating.

May God richly bless these efforts!

"69 CANDLES...
JUST MAKE SURE YOU DON'T BLOW THE ICING OFF THE CAKE."

I can help you plan for inflation and minimize income taxes to get the most from your savings.

Clarence Welma, CFP
Senior Financial Consultant
Phone: (800) 488.9817
Email: ClarenceWelma@investorsgroup.com

Investors Group
SOLUTIONS BUILT AROUND YOU
Investors Group Financial Services Inc.

*Trademarks owned by Investors Group Inc. and licensed to its affiliated corporations.

TORONTO 2003 AMSTERDAM
Via Martinair

Dates	Adult	Senior/ Youth	Child
Apr. **14**, 15	739	699	599
Apr. **21**,22,**28**,29	759	719	619
May **05**, 06, **12**, 13	789	749	639
May *17*,**19**,20, *24*,**26**,27,*31*	809	769	639
June **02**,03,*07*,**09**,10,*14*	839	799	659
June **16**,17,*21*	859	819	699
June **23**,24,*28*,**30**	919	879	759
July 01,*05*,**07**,08,*12*	959	919	779
July **14**,15,*19*,**21**,22,*26*,**28**,29	979	939	779
Aug. *02*,**04**,05,*09*,**11**,12	979	939	779
Aug. *16*,**18**,19,*23*,**25**,26,*30*	979	939	779
Sep. **01**,02,*06*,**08**,09,*13*	899	839	689
Sep. **15**,16,*20*,**22**,23,*27*,**29**,30	839	799	639
Oct. *04*,**06**,07,*11*,**13**,14,*18*	739	699	599
Oct. **20**,21	699	659	599

Airport Taxes/Fees extra $75 –Star Class $560 return
Senior: 60+, Youth: 15-25, Child: 2-14

Verstraete Travel & Cruises
(Offices in Aurora and St. Catharines)
36 Secord Dr. L2N 1K8 St. Catharines, ON
Tel: **905-934-4414** or Long Dist. **1-800-405-6088**

Editorial

Using God's name in vain?

Harry der Nederlanden

A number of church leaders in both the U.S. and Canada have chastised President George Bush for his use of religious language in his speeches to the nation. Leaders from the mainline churches especially have called his use of God language "divisive and reckless." In Europe many newspapers are depicting Bush as a dangerous religious fanatic because of his references to faith and God. Georgie Anne Geyer, writing in the *Chicago Tribune*, declared that Bush's determination to invade Iraq "is based primarily on religious obsession and visions of personal grandiosity."

An article in the *Ottawa Citizen* quoted several commentators on Bush's use of the language of faith: a commentator in France's *Le Monde* wrote that Bush "is convinced that he is inspired by God, and he is dangerous." The German magazine, *Der Spiegel*, recently put Mr. Bush on its cover with a cross behind him; the feature article said: "George W. Bush is convinced that it is God alone who has allowed him to occupy this office at this historic moment."

Elaine Pagels, who has written several books on early Christianity, complained, "When you frame a conflict as God's people versus Satan's people, one side can only annihilate the other."

Welton Gaddy, of the Interfaith Alliance, a liberal Christian coalition, said that by using overtly religious language Bush "stifles debate." He added that U.S. political leaders "must not hold the misguided illusion that they are prophets of God's will"(ENI).

These complaints, of course, come from very different perspectives. Some are prompted by a secularism that bridles at any mention of God or religion in the public square. Many liberals reduce all religiously motivated politics to "fundamentalism"; they think it's the first step toward theocracy and the suppression of all dissent.

Many clergy criticize Bush

Quite a number of the critics, however, are clergymen from mainline denominations. Since most of them are adamantly opposed to this war with Iraq (and, perhaps, to any war), it is hardly surprising that they would shudder at any use of religious language in connection with the war. Had Bush used religious language to call for further negotiation, I suspect that they would not have objected. After all, many of them have not been afraid to harness God to their own political agenda of continued inspections.

This debate about the use of "religious" language by a political leader is an important issue, for it will shape the "rules" of discourse in the public square in the future. On the one hand, it's a debate within the Christian community, as there are Christians who are strongly supportive of Bush's public expressions of faith as well as those who are very critical. Especially in the mainline churches, it's also a debate between the clergy, most of whom are outspokenly antiwar, and the members of their congregations, most of whom are supporting their president.

A test case

On the other hand, it's also a debate between Christians and secularists. Bush's open dependence on his faith is a test case in terms of the Christian participation in the public square. It is being closely watched by those who favor a separation between church and state that effectively blocks any appeal in the political realm to faith. Evangelicals in the U.S. and Canada have seen through the dualistic vision that confined faith to the private sphere and have been coming out of the closet to make their beliefs felt in the political realm (see Nancy Pearcey, p.6). To many of them, Bush has not been an embarrassment but a shining example.

You may have watched on television when George W. Bush addressed the American people after the terrorist attack of 9-11 and again after the crash of the space shuttle. Most Christians in Canada as well as in the U.S. deeply appreciated the pastoral tone of those speeches and lauded his courage in pointing his people to the need for faith in such times. In comparison Chrétien's speech on the occasion of 9-11 was watery gruel.

I personally felt less comfortable with Bush's use of "religious" language when he spoke of his determination to rid the world of evil-doers like Saddam Hussein. But that was at least in part because I disagreed with his rush to war and because I was (and still am) deeply pessimistic about his capacity to better the lot of the Iraqi people with military intervention. But does calling Saddam's regime evil stifle public debate more than calling it brutal, undemocratic and tyrannical? I doubt it. And does identifying blatant expressions of evil in the world necessarily put us in the role of the righteous and blind us to our own faults? Maybe a little. But that is just as true of those protesting in the name of peace.

Much of the discomfort felt by Christian leaders comes from not from the use of religious language as such but from the invocation of God in connection with a policy leading to war. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, speaking on Italian television, said that political leaders cannot invoke the name of God "to justify violence." But if it is ever right for the state to resort to the power of the sword, should the church be telling the state that it may never do so as the representative of God? Doesn't the Bible suggest the opposite — that the state may take human life only in the name of God?

Along with many critics of Bush's Iraq policy, I wonder whether there isn't an overweening confidence behind it in the power of Western democracy and the free market to "save" the Arab peoples from their own heritage. The Republican stress on the limited competence of government to solve problems does not seem to extend to Bush's foreign policy. Some speak of an idolatry here, but then we must remind ourselves that we may be guilty of a similar idolatry in some of our welfare state policies.

To go to war is the most wrenching and demanding action our political leaders can be called upon to take. If at such moments, in the greatest crises in a nation's history, our leaders may not call upon the name of the Lord, when can they?

If a leader wants to take the will of God into account, is he thereby claiming that his policies are the will of God? This is what some of the clergy critical of Bush are saying.

Their rhetoric, I suggest, is as dangerous as that ascribed to Bush, for it would deny to a Christian political leader the right to call on God in the hour of greatest need.

There are, of course, right and wrong ways to invoke the name of God. In the *Ottawa Citizen* article, Gerald Vandezande and John Redekop both warn about the dangers of calling on God only to rubber stamp our own policies. This is true not just for politicians but for Christians in any leadership position. Can we ever say, as the prophets did, "Thus saith the Lord?"

Christian Courier

Formerly known as Calvinist Contact
Founded in 1945
An independent biweekly that seeks to: report on significant events in the Christian community and the world; express opinions infused by Scripture and rooted in a Reformed perspective; provide contact for the Christian community.

EDITORIAL TEAM & PRODUCTION STAFF
Editor: Harry der Nederlanden *editor@christiancourier.ca*;
Journalist, Layout Designer: Alan Doerksen *journal@christiancourier.ca*;
Circulation: Rose der Nederlanden *subscriptions@christiancourier.ca*;
Accounts Manager: Ineke Strayer-Medcalf *accounts@christiancourier.ca*

REGIONAL REPORTERS
Jeff Hoogendoorn, Victoria; Jacky Huberts, Langley, B.C.; James Kwantes, Red Deer, Alta.; Stephen VanHelden, Calgary; Gordon Legge, Calgary; Jessie Schut, Edmonton; Valerie Walker, Halifax; Robert VanderVennen, Toronto; Margaret Dinsdale, Toronto.

EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Doug Roorda, Wendy Saunders, Erick Schuringa, Nelly Westerhoff, Bert Witvoet

The publication of comments, opinions or advertising does not imply agreement or endorsement by *Christian Courier* or the publisher. Please contact the circulation manager if you cannot afford the subscription price but want to receive *Christian Courier*.

Christian Courier
1 Hiscott St. St. Catharines, ON, L2R 1C7
Tel: (905) 682-8311; 1-800-969-4838
Fax: (905) 682-8313; Web site: www.christiancourier.ca
Publications Mail Registration No. 09375
We acknowledge the financial assistance of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.

Letter from Koyzis

Editor,

At the risk of appearing to desire more control over my public image, I should draw your attention to the "bio" at the end of my column of March 3, which mysteriously stated that the author "is quite certain he would not look good," leading one to think that this was a commentary on the accompanying photograph. Indeed, while my concern for my appearance largely extends to ensuring a properly tied bow tie, the bio should have read that the author "is quite certain he would not look good in a suit of armor," a not very humorous (in retrospect) reference to the Knights of Malta.

I should also comment on the response to my February 3 column on just war by Bert den Boggende. I was surprised at his evident misreading of my statement that "sometimes it is necessary to fight against avowed enemies who mean to harm our political community and our fellow citizens." In attempting to fight off the besieging Ottoman armies, were the Byzantines and Habsburgs really engaging in *offensive* warfare? Incredibly, that appears to be Mr. den Boggende's conclusion, but I can't imagine that anyone else would read it that way.

David T. Koyzis

Letters

U.S. 'has made an idol out of security'

Via a friend I received the letter that Harry Antonides wrote to president Bush. I found it more than striking that Harry quotes from Psalm 35, which he was reading the day President Bush announced the war in Iraq. Harry sees significance in that.

It just so happens that I also am following a schedule of daily Bible readings. In my schedule Psalm 35 does not come up until the days following March 17. Actually, I was reading Psalm 33 around the time that President Bush made his announcement. That Psalm says in verses 16-17: "No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse [or a tank] is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save."

Deeply troubled and conflicted

I would like to think that I, too, am a good and loyal Canadian and a friend of America. But I am afraid that the United States has made an idol out of security. More than $74 billion could do so much to relieve suffering in the world and to make the United States a safer place in the future. I am deeply troubled and conflicted by what's happening today.

Yesterday, the American ambassador to Canada, Paul Cellucci, laid a guilt trip on our country for not supporting his country. He openly stated how disappointed Americans are that Canada does not stand with them in this war. After all, we are friends. And the United States would have stood with us had we been threatened. "There would be no debate. There would be no hesitation," he added.

The price we have to pay

It hurts to have this disagreement with our closest ally. Yes, we are friends, but friends have to give each other room to disagree. No doubt, Canada will pay for this in trade and other economic ways. Cellucci warned his business audience that economic relations between the two countries would suffer. From news reports I gather that this is already happening. So be it. Maybe that's the price we have to pay for doing what we think is right.

My problem and that of many others is that we don't know enough to take sides. That's a terrible dilemma and one that does not offer us strong moral grounds for either position.

When I talked with a friend a few days ago, he pointed out that pre-emptive strike is not a just-war principle, nor can it be. So much depends on the situation. I agree totally. For the sake of the United States, I hope that clear and incontrovertible evidence of weapons of mass destruction will emerge in the coming weeks and months. I would love for Canada then to admit that we may have been wrong.

I myself see right and wrong in both positions — for and against the war. What complicates matters for me is that I do not believe that our government and our prime minister have a strongly principled position against war in Iraq. And I have been disheartened by the anti-Americanism coming from the mouth of some of our leaders. Nor do I support the simplistic notion that President Bush is willing to sacrifice human lives on the altar of oil as some anti-war protesters allege. Yet I do not like to see our friends resort to what appear to me to be weapons of huge destruction when they are faced with *potential* danger.

I will not use Psalm 33 to solve the dilemma of what we must do in the face of an evil regime (make that evil regimes in many countries). I, too, pray for a speedy end to the war and for very few casualties on both sides. God bless Iraq. God bless America!

Bert Witvoet,
St. Catharines, Ont.

Antonides' letter to President Bush

Dear Mr. President:

Whatever you may hear from our leaders in government, media, academia and "the street" in Canada, I want to assure you that there are still many others who are solidly behind the leadership you and the rest of your administration are providing to the free world.

This is my way of saying to you and all those who stand with you, and especially to your military: thank you. Thank you for the courage and determination you and your people have shown in risking so much and devoting immense resources to the fight against those who are determined to do your country and all of us great harm.

Governments called to oppose evil

I am a Christian, and I believe that Christ blesses the peacemakers. But the Bible also tells us that there is evil in the world, and that governments are called to oppose evil, promote justice, and protect the weak. Sometimes, that requires force, the kind that can be delivered only by military means. I believe that this is such a time. I pray that the war in Iraq will be swift and that loss of life and physical destruction, apart from Iraqi military installations, will be minimal.

My main reason for writing is to let you know that I have heard you ask for the prayers of your people. I want to add to those prayers, and I do so daily, often using the words of Psalm 31, especially verses 14 to 20, on your behalf.

This may interest you especially. I follow a certain schedule of daily Bible reading. On the morning of Monday, March 17, the day you made the historic announcement that military action would start if Saddam Hussein did not leave within 48 hours, the selection for that day was Psalm 35.

I am certain you are familiar with this Psalm. I believe that this is a very fitting prayer of God's people especially in times of momentous decisions such as you are now facing.

I also realize that we must be very careful in claiming for ourselves to be the chosen instruments of God to usher in his Kingdom. We are all very imperfect and flawed instruments. Yet I also believe that this selection of the Bible for that day was more than a meaningless coincidence. I am inclined to believe that your courageous leadership and the impressive American military capabilities have come together for such a time as this.

May you and your people be blessed by reading the amazing prayer of Psalm 35. And may the people of Iraq soon be liberated and then have the wisdom to use their new freedom wisely.

God bless America.

Harry Antonides,
Mississauga, Ont.

Chrétien made the right decision

The following is a letter Gerald Vandezande recently wrote to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien:

Dear Mr. Chrétien,

Re: Canada's Position on Invasion of Iraq

I am deeply thankful for your historic decision that "Canada will not participate" in the U.S.-U.K. led invasion of Iraq.

Your crucial decision lends enormous credibility to Canada's ongoing responsibility to work hard for international peace and justice. This responsibility particularly relates to the urgent need for immediate peaceful disarmament steps that effectively contribute to global freedom, harmony and justice for all nations and peoples.

Major peace-promoting decision

You rightly made this major peace-promoting decision on behalf of the Canadian people. This wise action certainly deserves widespread public support, also in the difficult days ahead!

As you pointed out: "Given some more weeks, disarmament would have been achieved." Especially if the U.S.A. and the U.K. governments would have given such essential efforts their full-fledged support, with the backing of the United Nations.

I am also most grateful for your vital pledge: "Canada will be in the vanguard of countries that go into Iraq after a war to help deal with humanitarian relief and rebuild the country." You are so right: "It has to be done through the United Nations, and we will be one of the first players there, no doubt. It has been the tradition of the Canadian government." I fully agree with you: "I hope there will be no need, if we could by some miracle not have a war, but if there is a war, Canada will always be there to help, to rebuild." This is a powerful tradition that we can and should continue to build on.

As I wrote in the Toronto Star: "Citizens and governments must work hard to prevent the terrible tragedy of war." (March 18th, 2003) Your leadership and that of Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Pope John Paul, have my genuine respect. Indeed, as Archbishop Tutu reminded us: "People of faith belong on the side of peace." May God continue to bless you with deep wisdom, real courage and good health!

Gerald Vandezande, C.M.,
Scarborough, Ont.

For a quick Letter to the Editor, please send it by fax to: (905)-682-8313, or by e-mail to: editor@ christiancourier.ca

Christian Courier

Member of Canadian Church Press and Evangelical Press Association.
Canada mail: Publications Mail Registration No. 09375. Postage paid at St. Catharines, Ont. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, 1 Hiscott St., St. Catharines, Ont. L2R 1C7.
U.S. mail: Christian Courier (USPS 518-090). Second-class postage paid at Lewiston, NY. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, Box 110, Lewiston, NY, 14092.

Subscriptions:	**Canada**	**U.S.A.**
(effective Nov. 11, 2002)	(G.S.T. incl.)	(G.S.T. free)
one year (26 issues)	$40.00	$32.00 (US)
two years (52 issues)	$75.00	$60.00 (US)

overseas one year $80.00 surface mail
Advertising deadlines: display advertising: Tuesday, 8:30 a.m. (13 days before publication date); classified advertising: Tuesday, 8:30 a.m. (13 days before publication date). See classified pages for more details. Advertising rate sheets available. (ISSN 1192-3415) Published biweekly on Mondays.
Address all correspondence to: 1 Hiscott St., St. Catharines, Ont. L2R 1C7.
Tel: 905-682-8311 or 1-800-969-4838, or fax: 905-682-8313, e-mail: subscriptions: subscriptions@christiancourier.ca , advertising: accounts@christiancourier.ca

PRINTED IN CANADA

Worldview

Speaker boosts the virtues of worldview to ministerial conference

Harry der Nederlanden

ANCASTER, Ont. — The featured speaker at the Minister's Conference, held at Redeemer University College recently — Nancy Pearcey — is someone whose name has become closely linked with that of Charles Colson. She co-authored the book *How Now Shall We Live* as well as *The Soul of Science* with Colson. She also served as the editor of *Breakpoint*, a daily radio and Internet commentary featuring Colson that seeks to spell out implications of a Christian worldview and as the policy director of Wilberforce Forum, which seeks to develop and disseminate a Christian viewpoint in all areas of culture.

COURTESY REDEEMER UNIVERITY COLLEGE

Nancy Pearcey

Pearcey is well-acquainted with the Reformed thought, as she did graduate work in the history of philosophy at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto. Along with Colson, she has been credited with popularizing the main themes of Kuyperian thought among American evangelicals.

Runner refresher course

For many in the audience, I'm sure, the two speeches given by Pearcey on the theme "Relating Christian Worldview to Pastoral Ministry" was a refresher course in Philosophy 101 as taught by Evan Runner. This is not to downgrade the speaker, for we do need such refreshers now and then. What are most sermons except reminders of truths we've heard repeated many times before? Pearcey did admit that her lectures were geared to evangelical audiences, and she would have done well to adjust them a bit more to a Reformed one that is more familiar with the basic themes.

The single greatest barrier to working out a Christian worldview in all areas of life, said Pearcey, is the public-private dichotomy that has long dominated thinking in our culture. All large bureaucracies in the public square strive to be value neutral, so that the only place to find personal fulfilment is in the private realm, but this isn't very satisfying either because it does not include larger communal ventures but only matter of personal choice. Closely related to the public-private dichotomy is the fact-value dichotomy, which sorts out publicly accessible truth from the realm of religion and ethics, which are rooted in the emotional and the personal.

These two dichotomies have served as weapons by which appeal to religious truth have been declared illegitimate in public discourse. The secularizers recognize that religion does influence people's opinions, but this should be kept on a subjective, private plane; they deny that has any status as public knowledge. The knowledge claims of believers are merely the assertion of private values and any position identified with religion is ruled out of order.

Many Christians have also adopted a sacred-secular dichotomy which compartmentalizes their faith into a realm of personal piety, where faith applies, and the realm of science, of objective knowledge of the world, where they speak the same language as everyone else. This conveys the impression that Christianity has nothing to say outside the sphere of personal beliefs. As a result, more and more of the public world has been taken over by secularism.

Fail to be salt and light

"If Christian don't develop their own toolbox," warned Pearcey, "they'll borrow from the secular one and end up absorbing a non-Christian worldview." They will fail to be salt and a light and instead end up conspiring against their own faith.

To overcome the various dichotomies that constrict the full expression of our faith, we need to develop a Christian worldview that is rooted in creation – fall – redemption, for every world view seeks to address what is humanity's original purpose, why is the world distorted, and how do we restore this world to health.

After her lecture, Pearcey ran the audience through several worldviews to show how each answered the questions of origins, fall and redemption. She suggested that we live in a make-up-your-mind time in which it is no longer possible to live a wishy-washy Christianity because there are no longer any fences we can straddle.

In her afternoon lecture, Pearcey gave a very skeletal overview of the evangelical heritage in America. The purpose was to expose the roots of some of the dichotomies she had pointed out in the morning lecture. Because the historical sketches were made wholly to serve the purpose of bringing out these crippling features, they often bordered on being caricatures, but they did serve to highlight some characteristic weaknesses in North American spirituality. Pearcey did make a link between American and Canadian evangelicalism, suggesting they have very similar roots, but the parallel was too glib to be very useful.

Roots of American evangelicalism

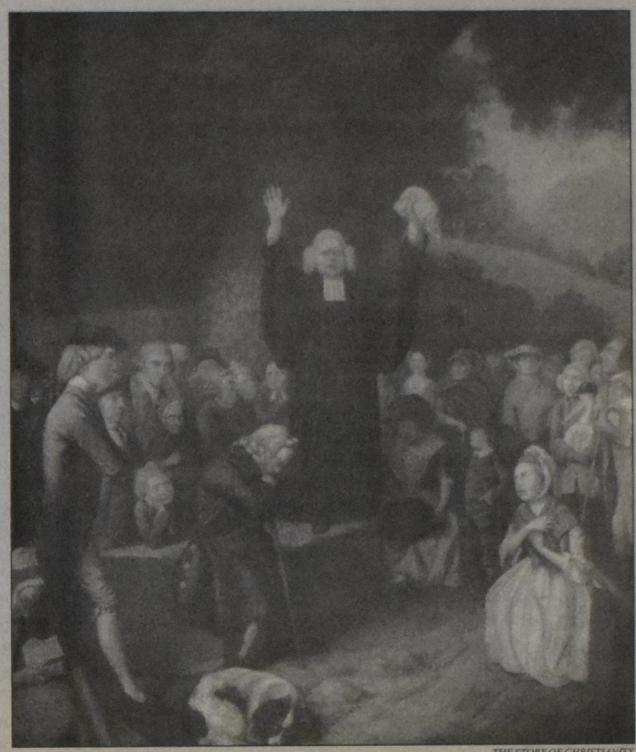
American evangelicalism has its roots in the camp meetings and in the emotionalism of the revivals that characterized the American frontier. As the expansion westward outran the traditional institutions, settlers also left behind the mainline churches such as the Congregational and Episcopalian churches. The people scattered along the frontier lost contact with their intellectual and theological traditions and were left to the ministry of frontier preachers, most of whom were itinerant Methodist preachers. The latter were often not highly educated but had a talent for appealing to people's emotions. They Christianized the population by calling sinners from lives of drunkenness and gambling but in the process they also spread an individualistic brand of Christianity with a low view of the church.

Pearcey went on to give a brief overview of some of the main figures in the First and Second Great Awakenings, discussing them under the rubric of "doing good while doing damage."

Avoiding denominations

In the Great Awakening of the early 18th century, revival preachers like George Whitefield, closely associated with the Wesleys, worked especially on people's emotions and drew on his considerable speaking talents as well as on mass marketing techniques to bring crowds to conversion. He also scorned established churches and made an end-run around denominations to address people as individuals.

Similar trends were accentuated in the Second Great Awakening, which took place after the American Revolution. It took in the political rhetoric of the revolution from Tom Paine and Thomas Jefferson, stressing self-government in religion as well as politics and throwing off ecclesiastical hierarchy and authority along with political tyranny.



THE STORY OF CHRISTIANITY

George Whitefield Preaching, *by John Collett.*

'Common-sense realism'

On a philosophical level, these attitudes were given support by the "common-sense realism" of Scottish philosophy and theology. Like the founders of America and the Declaration of Independence, Scottish realism sought a basis for knowledge in self-evident truths. It further espoused the idea of a "fallen church" obscured by tradition and sought to recover the original purity of the church, a theme that resonated with the political idea that in the New World people could start over as if from a state of nature.

As a result of these developments, argued Pearcey, churches withdrew from an intellectual encounter with the world, gave up the idea of religion as the whole of life and abandoned rational studies to science.

Despite the title of the conference, Pearcey actually did very little concrete "relating of Christian worldview to pastoral ministry" and some of the questions asked afterwards indicated some sense of disappointment in this respect. One questioner suggested that both preachers and teachers in the CRC have been quite faithful in promoting a Christian worldview, yet many young people are turning precisely to evangelical churches that are weak in this respect and which make a stronger appeal to the emotions.

In some ways, Pearcey was "preaching to the choir," that is, boosting something we have long ago embraced. In fact, we have already begun to question some of its shortcomings or limits. When we speak of worldview, we don't do so with the evangelical enthusiasm of Pearcey. Especially when it is promoted as something rather static, that is, as a "framework" that we can all employ as a "tool" to refute the secularists and other enemies and thereby gain the high ground, the concept of worldview needs to be sold with a warning label: "Take with a grain of salt and generous drafts of life-giving water."

The conference would have been richer and more helpful had the second part provided for some reflection on possible weaknesses of the worldview approach and on ways to address them. I personally am especially dubious about attempts to bring together the long history of natural law with the emphasis on worldview, as Colson seems to be doing. It makes some very strong claims to being public knowledge, including knowledge about what is good for everyone in this country.

One characteristic of the Kuyperian worldview relative to politics is a certain self-restraint with regard to public knowledge and the public square.

Ontario Premier Eves visits Smithville Christian School

Harry der Nederlanden

SMITHVILLE, Ont. — The parking lots of Smithville's Christian grade school and high school were filled and cars lined the road for a half-kilometre or so past the church. I parked in the church parking lot and joined the parade of people hiking along the shoulder of the road to the grade school.

Parked in the entrance to the school parking lot were two white vans carrying the markings of major television news services – CTV and CBC. And there were more farther on – five, I counted, and one belonging to a radio station. A man stood beside a car near the entrance of the school, a notebook on the hood and a microphone near his mouth. Eavesdropping, I heard him dictating events that had not yet happened. He seemed confident there would be no surprises.

Special day for small town

It was a special day for the small town of Smithville, Ontario, and the community of Christian school supporters. The Premier of Ontario, Ernie Eves, was scheduled to make a visit, the first time an Ontario Premier has ever come to Smithville and his destination was Covenant Christian school, so there was lots of excitement.

By the time Eves arrived with his retinue, the school gym was crowded with Christian school supporters and staff from other Christian schools in the area. Then the children from the grade school had to be squeezed in front to provide a welcome as well as a backdrop for the television cameras.

The Ontario premier made the trip to Smithville March 20 to announce that the Conservative government would reinstate the incremental increases in the tax credit for those who send their children to independent schools. The schedule was frozen last year because of budget restraints.

Minor strings attached

There are minor strings attached. Schools will be required to report to parents on student performance and how it is measured, and they will have to check with the Ontario College of Teachers on a prospective teacher's certification before hiring.

After the ceremonies, few of the news reporters asked any questions at all about the funding of independent schools. Most of the questions were about Eves' decision to give the budget speech outside the house, and about the war in Iraq.

Lenten Sunday

Lloyd Rang

Old man and arthritic dog
Stop together, test the air
As church skirts part in a warm wind
Ladies legs are lily stems
Bending in the sunlight.

A ball diamond awaits
A rain to wash the drab away
The homestead's hockey boards
Pried away and stacked
Like hymnals on the lawn.

Doxologies and oxygen —

I'm your hometown boy
Runners swollen tongued —
Lolling from anxious feet
Scuffing in salted sand and
Thinking of you.

And minivans and marzipan.
Our unborn children's
Grade school graduations —
How the shape of the cross is so small
In your cupped hand.

Lloyd Wrang, a former teacher living in Bowmanville, Ontario, has been writing speeches and releases for the Premier of Ontario.

The dirty little secret

Peter Schuurman

"Trying to keep me alive longer, you are," the old man in the emergency ward accused my wife, who was caring for him there.

This old man was suspicious. He had a pain in his chest for the past three days but he did not want to go to the hospital. "Finally, I caved in," he said. "I was curious to find out if it was a heart attack."

Jesuit author Ivan Illich (1926-2002) often critiqued our society's "pursuit of health." In the last 20 years of his life, he allowed a growth on his face to fester, leaving it unexamined and untreated. He wanted to experience some of the character-shaping rawness of life rather than exhaust himself in a frenzy for salves and cures.

Different words for death

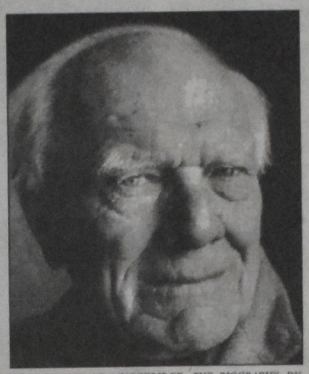
If we are not desperately trying to erase pain with pills, we are hiding death behind words. The dead have, clinically speaking, "experienced a negative patient outcome," or in religious language, "passed on to the next life", "been called home", "gone to meet their Maker", "answered the roll call up yonder" or even "moved on to sing in the heavenly choir."

You may chuckle at that. A sense of humor in the matter of suffering and death is at least evidence of some other emotion than pervasive fear. North Americans, as many have said as the invasion of Iraq continues, are not that acquainted with the grief of war. Officials go to great lengths to sanitize speech and video to prevent us from exposure to the raw horror of armed combat. One student peace activist e-mailed me, calling me to "break out of the Lysol version of TV." Perhaps Lysol is a good metaphor for North American life as a whole.

At death's door

Acclaimed journalist Malcolm Muggeridge (1903-1990) reflects on his impending death in his book *Conversion: A Spiritual Journey*. He comments on a retirement home in Florida he visited, which he playfully calls "Sunshine Haven," where "everything was done to make us feel that we were not really aged, but still full of youthful zest and expectations; if not teenager, then keen-agers, perfectly capable of disporting ourselves on the dance floor, the beach, or even in bed." It is a clean, beautifully decorated community, with all signs of death conspicuously hidden. To be sure, Muggeridge writes, in this age "death becomes the dirty little secret that sex once was."

Think of this in the context of Lent. The world abhors the Crucified God. Good Friday comes without commercial glitter, and it offends the seductive promises that shine in every retail store and on every channel. We live for growth, expansion, and victory, and sadly enough, the church sometimes mirrors this show, although using very spiritual props. We do not want to die, even if we profess Easter resurrection on Sunday morning. And our fear makes us bland.



FROM COVER OF *MUGGERIDGE: THE BIOGRAPHY*, BY RICHARD INGRAMS

Malcolm Muggeridge

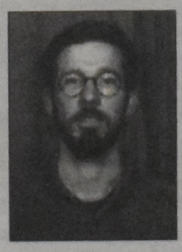
Death, be not proud

To some degree, the church is opening up around the topic of sexuality. As our culture crumbles, and Christendom along with it, we ought not to participate in the charade surrounding death. Though many kingdoms, both private and global, may fall and die, Christ and his kingdom will outlast them all. Death is a third birth, perhaps painful, but not to be feared.

Charlie Chaplin was theologically astute in his comment that life is a tragedy when seen in close-up but a comedy in the long-shot.

Muggeridge concludes his book by saying that life in this world is "decidedly overrated," and takes side with St. Theresa of Avila in declaring our stay here to be no more than a night in a second-class hotel. He writes: "Like a prisoner awaiting his release, like a schoolboy when the end of term is near, like a migrant bird ready to fly south, like a patient in hospital anxiously scanning the doctor's face to see whether a discharge may be expected, I long to be gone."

Ivan Illich would concur, and remind us to cultivate the present. He implores us with these words: "Yes, we suffer pain, we become ill, we die. But we also hope, laugh and celebrate; we know the joy of caring for one another; often we are healed and we recover by many means. We do not have to pursue the flattening-out of human experience. I invite all to shift their gaze, their thoughts, from worrying about health care to cultivating the art of living. And, today with equal importance, the art of suffering, the art of dying."



Peter Schuurman is currently on sabbatical from his campus chaplaincy work at Brock University, in St. Catharines, Ont.

A **charitable** gift **annuity** offers:

REDEEMER University College

- the peace of mind of a guaranteed lifetime income, largely tax free
- the satisfaction of knowing that you will be providing a future gift for Redeemer University College

Rates of return for those over 65 range from 7% to 10%.
Please contact us for your own confidential, no-obligation quote.
Information available on other gift-planning options as well.

CSS

Redeemer University College
777 Garner Road East, Ancaster, Ontario L9K 1J4
905-648-2131 ext. 4205 (Ben) stewardship@redeemer.on.ca

Help to support Christian journalism!

Christian Courier **is a ministry of Reformed Faith Witness. All gifts of $10 or more are tax-deductible and will receive an official receipt. Please make cheques payable to: Reformed Faith Witness, and send to: 1 Hiscott St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 1C7**

Church

Women flocking to theological education in Myanmar

Anto Akkara

YANGON (ENI) — Theology may not attract many women students in certain other Asian countries, but in Myanmar, women account for more than half of the students enrolled in the country's theological colleges.

"More and more women are now coming for theological education," says Peter Joseph, executive secretary of the Association of Theological Education in Myanmar.

Of the 4,000 students enrolled in theological colleges run by mainstream Protestant churches, more than 50 per cent today are women, Joseph says.

Interest in these 27 theological institutions has risen, at least in part, in response to the government curbs imposed on secular colleges after pro-democracy student protests in 1988, observers say.

The government relocated many secular colleges from cities to remote areas of the country and cut class hours back in an attempt to prevent students from uniting in further protests.

JUDE KHIN/WWW.MYANMAR-BURMA.COM

Myanmar women dressed in traditional costumes. A high number of Myanmar women are now going to Protestant theological colleges.

In addition, students have been attracted to the new subjects many theological colleges have added to their curricula, says Anna May Say Pa, principal of the Baptist-run Myanmar Institute of Theology in Yangon.

"We include even computer education as well as improving English-language skills," she notes.

Christian college graduates better educated

Following the imposition of military rule in 1962, the government nationalized all educational institutions. Those run by the churches, however, are not subjected to the same level of government scrutiny as secular ones.

Graduates of the theological colleges are considered "better educated" than their counterparts from government-run secular colleges, Pa says, and are sought out as employees by the United Nations and other international agencies.

Not compromised at all

But the colleges' traditional mission of theological education has "not been compromised at all," she insists, pointing to the keen competition for admission to theology programs.

More than 200 students took an entrance exam this month for the 70 places available in one master's course in theology.

"Our women have a strong sense of mission and evangelization. That explains why they are coming in large numbers," says Pa, who has taught theology for three decades.

Approximately 6.5 per cent of Myanmar's 52 million people are Christians, and almost half of them are Baptists.

Vong Tsish Shi, a Naga tribal girl who is pursuing a master's degree in theology at the Myanmar Institute of Theology, told ENI that she wanted to seek ordination as a pastor. But, she quickly added, "our people are still not prepared to accept women as pastors."

Mary Dun, principal of Myanmar Institute of Christian Theology — another Baptist seminary in Yangon — says the high numbers of women students at theological colleges in recent years is "preparing the way for a silent revolution."

Congregations have been reluctant to take women as pastors, "but this is sure to be challenged soon," said Dun, one of the three women principals of the country's five major theological colleges.

All five institutions include a course on gender and inclusive theology, which, Dun hopes, will change the "social bias against women's ordination in the long run."

Myanmar's junta promises equal treatment of Christians

Anto Akkara

YANGON (ENI) — The leader of Myanmar's military government has told a church group that the minority Christian community in this predominantly Buddhist nation "will not be discriminated against."

Christians facing discrimination

General Khin Nyunt, Secretary of the State Peace and Development Council, made his assurance when he met a six-person group led by Rev. Konrad Raiser, general secretary of the World Council of Churches.

Raiser told the general and other government leaders at the meeting that the country's Christian minority and other groups were facing "intentional or involuntary discrimination" in some parts of Myanmar.

"I would be failing in my task if I did not indicate to you concerns about intentional or involuntary discrimination in certain parts of the country against Christian minorities and ethnic groups," Raiser explained to Khin Nyunt. "I am raising these concerns not out of any political interest, but concern with the well-being, peace and stability of the whole country."

Most Christians in remote areas

Most Christians, who account for about six per cent of Myanmar's 52 million people, belong to ethnic minority groups in remote areas while nearly 90 per cent of the population is Buddhist. The rest of the population is Muslim.

Raiser told ENI after the meeting that the general had acknowledged that "Christians may have been targets in action by the government to suppress rebel groups."

But the general had contended "such incidents should not be construed as deliberate discrimination" against Christians, Raiser noted.

Some of the predominantly Christian minority groups have been engaged in armed struggle against the domination of the Burmese majority, nearly all of whom are Buddhists.

At the meeting, Raiser outlined Christian concern about cases in rural areas where Buddhists had forced Christians to renounce their faith and local authorities had closed their eyes to the burning of church property.

Government-controlled media

The meeting between the church delegation, which included Myanmar church leaders, and the government officials was the lead story in the government-controlled media.

There are no private or independent media in Myanmar, which some opponents of the military junta still call by its former name Burma, which has been closed to the outside world since a military takeover in 1962. Massive protests for the restoration of democracy were crushed by the military in 1988.

During his visit, Raiser visited the headquarters of the Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC) for a meeting with 30 prominent church leaders from Myanmar.

Welcoming Raiser to the MCC office, the council's general secretary, Rev. Smith N Za Thawng, described Raiser's visit as "historic" for the churches in Myanmar, which have been cut off for decades from the outside world.

Would 7% to 10% lifetime income appeal to you?

Over 65? Charitable Gift Annuities can provide these rates, largely tax-free and ultimately benefit the charities of your choice.

Please ask for a confidential, no obligation quotation.

✺ *NEW..* ✺ *NEW..* ✺ *NEW..* ✺ *NEW..* ✺

Effective January 1, new rules provide an immediate charitable receipt of approx. 20% - 25% for all charitable gift annuities. *Our Rates have not changed.* If you've been thinking about getting a quotation, this is the time to do it! No obligation, call or write today!

Link Charity Canada Inc.
45 Harriet St. Toronto M4L 2G1
Ph: 416-410-4244 Fax: 416-465-6367

Maranatha Homes

This award-winning ***Senior Citizen Home*** is located close to Burlington Christian Reformed Church and Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church, with audio hook-up for the Sunday services in every apartment from both churches and a weekly evening video church service presentation..

Local bus service at the door. Monthly rent is geared to income.

Information available from:
Rosanne van der Woerd
3260 New Street Burlington ON L7N 3L4
905-639-9054

Church

Kenyan president drafts churches into anti-AIDS campaign

Fredrick Nzwili

NAIROBI, Kenya (ENI) — Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki has singled out the country's religious leaders as having a special role to play in helping to alleviate AIDS, and drafted their support in a new government campaign to fight the lethal disease.

"From your vantage point and [as] an additional vehicle, you can assist the government to win this war," Kibaki told Christian and Muslim religious leaders gathered on March 23 in the capital, Nairobi, where he announced the launch of the campaign.

"It is crucial that those affected are not left to feel lonely or isolated, but [that] the whole country cares for them," said the president.

MISTERSEED.COM/DAILYNEWS

Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki speaks at the London School of Economics and Political Science in London, England (December 5, 2001).

'Total War Against HIV/AIDS'

Since the launch of the campaign, called "Total War Against HIV/AIDS," leaders of Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian churches and of the Muslim community have been meeting with the country's health minister, Charity Ngilu, to assist in designing a strategy for the drive.

The government has allocated 80 million shillings (about $1.5 million Cdn) of a grant received from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to faith-based groups to be used in caring for AIDS orphans, providing counseling, purchasing medications and engaging in advocacy work. Kenya has also received a 4.1 billion shillings ($70 million) grant from the World Bank development agency for the fight against AIDS.

Kenyan churches have long been at the forefront of anti-AIDS efforts, providing treatment in church-run hospitals and care for Kenya's 1.5 million AIDS orphans as well as counseling and education programs.

But the previous government, voted out in December 2002, viewed the churches as supporters of the political opposition and had not backed their AIDS efforts. Kibaki's election ousted the Kenyan African National Union, which had been in power for 40 years.

700 die of AIDS each day

About 700 Kenyans die of AIDS every day.

"If we are not infected we are affected," said Anglican Archbishop Benjamin Nzimbi. "We are committed to eradicating the virus and reducing the suffering of those affected. As the body of Christ confronted by a disaster of this magnitude, we share the pain of those that suffer."

Rev. Stephen Kanyaru, presiding bishop of the Methodist Church of Kenya, said: "We are concerned as a church because we believe in the wholeness, fullness and sanctity of life."

Still, the efforts by religious groups have been criticized as being too quiet, in light of the scale of the problem.

"They have been too slow to act and sometimes timid," said Jacinta Maingi, from the World Council of Churches' ecumenical HIV/AIDS initiative in Africa.

Roman Catholic and Anglican churches have stressed abstinence and fidelity as effective ways to arrest the spread of the disease, and have opposed the mass distribution of condoms as a method of AIDS prevention.

"I teach my soldiers chastity and they do it wherever they go on peacekeeping missions," said Roman Catholic Bishop Cornelius Korir, chaplain of Kenya's armed forces. "Let us teach our children the same."

Canadian-Romanian gold mining venture draws church opposition

Jonathan Luxmoore

WARSAW, Poland (ENI) — Romanian church leaders have protested against plans to bulldoze eight churches and nine cemeteries to make way for Europe's biggest ever open pit goldmine.

"If the authorities approve this project, it will slip beyond our control," said Andrei Andreicut, Romanian Orthodox archbishop of Alba Iulia. "But we don't agree to this act of destruction and will insist our demands are met."

A storm of protest

Plans for mining at Rosia Montana in Transylvania's Apuseni Mountains have already raised a storm of protest from local residents, environmental groups and historians.

The project, put forward by a Canadian-Romanian joint venture called Gold Corporation, was also criticized by Alba Iulia's Roman Catholic archbishop, Gyorgy-Miklos Jakubinyi, who accused Romania's centre-left government of "acting under international pressure."

"The Catholic, Orthodox and Calvinist [Reformed] churches were consulted twice — but only after the government had already signed its contracts with Gold Corporation," the Catholic archbishop told ENI.

In addition to razing Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Reformed and Unitarian churches and cemeteries, the mining project is expected to force at least 2,000 people from their homes and to require the removal of Roman remains and relics from the region's ancient Dacian civilization.

Historians and archaeologists have joined forces with local inhabitants and environmentalists to block the project, which is co-directed by Canada's Gabriel Resources and Romania's Minvest-Deva.

Said Andreicut: "Although we all want to save our country's spiritual treasures, the tragedy lies in the fact that people are poor and the economic needs immense."

Potential ecological disaster

Romania's *Evenimentul Zilei* daily newspaper reported that 300 tons of gold and 1,600 tons of silver were expected to be extracted from the 1,600-hectare (4,000-acre) site over 17 years.

Environmentalists worry about the potential impact on the surrounding region. Another mining project, Baia Mare in northern Romania, using similar methods for extracting gold, created an ecological disaster in 2000, polluting the Danube and Tisza rivers, killing fish and contaminating drinking water.

A parliamentary commission is considering the Rosia Montana proposal but a decision was not expected until autumn.

Church representatives were studying the plan, Andreicut said, and would demand the building of new churches and the relocation of the cemeteries "in line with necessary spiritual and sanitary requirements."

"The government isn't intentionally destroying culture and spirituality," the Orthodox archbishop told ENI. "But it's seeking large-scale projects which will help economic development. In this situation, these cultural and spiritual dimensions are clearly being neglected."

Sri Lanka moves toward anti-conversion legislation

Elizabeth Kendal

AUSTRALIA (ANS) — The call to introduce anti-conversion laws in Sri Lanka has been championed by fundamentalist Buddhist groups for several years as a direct reaction to the growth of the Evangelical Christian Church in this predominantly Buddhist land. However, successive governments chose not to introduce such a bill.

In November 2002, however, the Hindu Cultural Affairs Minister Mr. Maheshwaran, on his return from a visit to Tamil Nadu in India, publicly vowed to introduce a bill in Parliament curbing religious conversions in imitation of an anti-conversion bill in Tamil Nadu, India. The lobby, consisting of Buddhist, Hindu and some Catholic groups, endorse the Minister's stand.

There have been some public demonstrations both for and against the proposed legislation.

It is believed that the draft legislation will be modeled on the Tamil Nadu bill. It is feared that it may attract wide support in Parliament both among the government members and the opposition. In the event that it is voted into effect by the Parliament, the only recourse is to challenge it in the Supreme Court. However, faith in the impartiality of the judiciary is low.

Elizabeth Kendal is the Principal Researcher and Writer for the World Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission (WEA RLC)
www.worldevangelical.org/rlc.html

Psalter Hymnals falling apart?

Don't buy replacements, recycle them. We can rebind almost any book for a fraction of the cost of new, and the rebound books will last much longer than the original binding. Why not send us one of your church's hymnals or bibles and we will rebind it at no charge, just to show you how good your old books can look. Send your sample request on church letterhead with the item for binding.

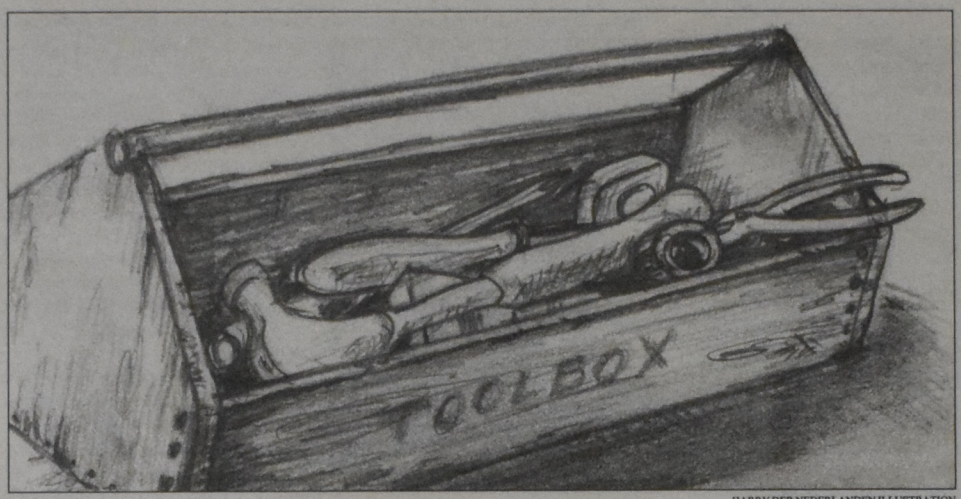
Limit one sample per church. Normal price for quantities of five or more $7.50. We rebind and restore all types of books, including personal and family Bibles.

wbm Wallaceburg Bookbinding & MFG CO. LTD.
1-800-214-BIND
95 Arnold Street
Wallaceburg, ON N8A 3P3

Tools of the trade

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

"Don't forget the tools," I said to my son Jason as he and my husband loaded up our station wagon with a dismantled bed, a dresser, a mattress, a computer, a desk chair, books and clothes in preparation for the trip to Jason's rented residence by the university he attends. "You're going to need them to set up your bed again," I added.



HARRY DER NEDERLANDEN ILLUSTRATION

'Inner toolbox'

On occasion our children will need screwdrivers, pliers, and hammers, along with tape measures, knives, and saws. They're easy enough to acquire from any parent's toolbox. But our children also need different tools, located in what Anne Lamott calls an "inner toolbox." In *Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith*, she writes, "It's funny: I always imagined when I was a kid that adults had some kind of inner toolbox, full of shiny tools: the saw of discernment, the hammer of wisdom, the sandpaper of patience. But then when I grew up I found that life handed you these rusty bent old tools — friendships, prayer, conscience, honesty — and said, Do the best you can with these, they will have to do. And mostly, against all odds, they're enough" (Pantheon Books, 1999, pp. 103).

Christian parents play crucial role

Christian parents play a crucial role in filling their children's "inner toolboxes" with essential tools. The kinds of tools they give their children will depend largely on what "trade" they want their kids to pursue. Spiritual clarity on that issue is crucial because without it parents may inadvertently give their children the wrong tools. To perform their tasks, plumbers don't use trowels and bricklayers don't use plungers. Carpenters don't use cleavers and butchers don't use hammers. Each has to know his or her occupation and which tools are necessary. If they don't, the job won't get done.

Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language (Second College Edition) defines "tools of one's trade" as "any instrument or device necessary to one's profession or occupation" (The World Publishing Company, 1972, pp. 1498). In order for us as Christian parents to know what tools to give our children, we first need to understand what our business here on earth is. What are we supposed to be occupied with?

First Corinthians 10:31 clearly spells out God's all-encompassing vision for our occupation: "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." When that vision shapes our parenting goals, what tools will we give to our children? Lamott mentions several important tools: friendships, prayer, conscience, honesty, discernment, wisdom, and patience. Many other tools are necessary and useful as well.

Wooden, unresponsive

Excitement about ordinary things is a crucial tool for God's children as they live before his face. Once boredom about God's world sets in, a ho-hum attitude to the wonders of life on earth, we and our children will become wooden and unresponsive in our relationship to God. In *The Way We Are* Margaret Visser writes, "I find . . . that I have fiercely guarded my original puzzled, anxious state, for it sharpens my vision and never lets my curiosity relax . . . I refuse to accept the ordinary as dull: common things — it stands to reason — are the most important things, the ones with history and politics and meaning, the ones with clout" (Harper- Collins Publishers, Ltd., 1994, pp. xviii, xix).

Christian parents who are excited about owls and odes, flutes and ferns, Canada and the Congo, babies and barnacles, and a myriad of other topics will pass that enthusiasm on to their children. By doing so, they'll tell their kids, "God's world is so amazing! He deserves all the glory."

Assurance of God's presence

Another significant tool Christian parents want to give their children is assurance of God's presence, the certainty that "neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39). In *Aging With Grace: What the Nun Study Teaches Us About Leading Longer, Healthier, and More Meaningful Lives*, David Snowdon, Ph.D. Relates the poignant story of Sister Laura, mistakenly diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, who clung to the truth of the apostle Paul's words. While discussing her misdiagnosis with Snowdon, Sister Laura said, "Doctor Snowdon, do you know what my worst fear was? . . . That I was going to forget Jesus . . . I finally realized that I may not remember Him, but He will remember me" (Bantam Books, 2001, pp. 125).

Among other things, our children will eventually confront conflict, disease, failure, financial stress, death of friends or family, and ultimately their own deaths. The assurance of God's presence will not only ease their paths, it will be the foundation on which they can build their lives.

Humility important

Humility is a tool Christian parents don't want their children to live without. Parents echo the apostle Paul's command: "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you" (Romans 12:3).

Why is humility such an important tool? In *Soul Survivor: How My Faith Survived the Church*, Philip Yancey helps answer that question when he explains his relationship to Dr. Paul Brand, renowned in the world medical community. Yancey writes, "He knew presidents, kings, and many famous people, but he rarely mentioned them, preferring instead to reminisce about individual leprosy patients. He talked openly about his failures, and always tried to deflect credit for his successes to his associates. Every day he rose early to study the Bible and to pray. Humility and gratitude flowed from him naturally...." (Doubleday, 2001, pp.64-65).

People will glimpse God's grandeur

Yancey's faith in God grew because of Dr. Brand's example. He learned that it "is indeed possible to live in modern society, achieve success without forfeiting humility, serve others sacrificially, and yet emerge with joy and contentment" (pp. 67). Our children have received gifts from God. When they use their gifts in a spirit of humility, God's name will be glorified and people will glimpse his grandeur.

Another tool Christian parents will want their children to have in their "inner toolboxes" can't be summed up in one word. It's a blend of perseverance, hope, faith, and cheerfulness when encountering suffering. When children possess this tool, their suffering, whatever shape it takes, will not embitter or destroy them. Rather, it will sanctify them, becoming what Mary Pipher, author of *The Middle of Everywhere: The World's Refugees Come to Our Town*, refers to as "redemptive." She explains it like this: "Suffering is redemptive when it leads us to a deeper, more nuanced understanding of ourselves and other humans. . . . Through suffering, people learn the importance of kindness. They learn that love is all that matters. They develop a sense of perspective and scale. They learn tolerance and empathy. After much is lost, they learn appreciation for what remains" (Harcourt, Inc., 2002, pp. 301, pp. 302).

Though none of us wants to see our children suffer, we know that in this broken world they will. The best way to give children this tool which forges redemptive suffering is to tell them our own stories of pain, sharing with them only what they are old enough to understand and assimilate. But instead of focusing only on the misery we experienced, put the spotlight on God "who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (2 Corinthians 1:4).

Our children can benefit from many other tools that give God glory: laughter, frugality, compassion, service. Perhaps you can think of others. Whatever good tools you pass on to your children, I'm sure your prayer for them is similar to mine: that our children become tools in God's hands for his glory and the well-being of others.

Islamic court opens for business in Indonesia

(Compass) — Indonesia's first Islamic court opened in the troubled northwest province of Aceh on March 3 as thousands celebrated. The Aceh legislature recently instituted sharia, the Islamic legal system based on the teachings of the Quran.

The new court can implement punishment for Muslims who propagate beliefs other than Islam, fail to attend Friday prayers three times in a row, or sell food, cigarettes or drinks in daylight hours during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. Officials said the court would eventually handle murder, adultery and theft cases.

Led by two decorated elephants, about 5,000 people in the city of Banda Aceh marched, sang Muslim songs and chanted prayers to mark the inauguration of the court, which coincided with Islamic New Year celebrations.

The government of Indonesia has tried to maintain religious neutrality. However, the country's estimated population of 220 million is 80 per cent Muslim, making it the world's most populous Muslim nation.

Psychology/Family

Can I get away with saying this?

Getting Unstuck
Arlene Van Hove

Ned and Nicole were married 15 years ago on a sun-drenched beach surrounded by family and close friends. They remembered a gentle breeze playing coyly with Nicole's bridal veil giving them an ethereal feeling throughout the ceremony that spun great hopes of love and longing. Yet, here they were in my office, wondering what went wrong and where they might have gone off track in the last 10 years. Ned is a large store manager and Nicole works part time in a florist shop. Together they are raising three children ages 9, 11 and 13.

A troubling theme

Ned and Nicole's theme is similar to other couples. A difference is usually one of degree. Nicole complains bitterly of Ned's lack of involvement in family life. "I am tired of encouraging him to spend time with the children. I am tired of warning him about his short fuse. I am tired of his impatience. I am tired of the amount of time he spends on the computer. It's exhausting trying to make things work between him, me and the kids!" She looks out the window and continues, "Sometimes I wish I were a single parent because I would have no daily expectations of him and life would be a lot more peaceful."

Ned is scowling at Nicole and rolls his eyes. "She's making all of this up," he retorts. "I help her all the time, she just doesn't notice." He shoves his hands in his pockets and looks at the ceiling.

Nicole shrugs her shoulders and glances over to me. She wants me to ask him for a daily accounting of his time. I don't go there because we will get into the "he said, she said" turmoil. I remain quiet.

Different for a while

Finally, I suggest they are both frustrated and tired of what is happening between them. They nod silently.

"You want things to be better but you do not know where to begin." They nod again. I pause. The quietness of the room helps them think.

Slowly I ask, "What do you think needs to be different?"

Nicole hesitates as she looks at Ned but then shrugs her shoulders and says firmly, "We went to a Campus Crusade Family Life conference three years ago and things were different after that for a while. Then it went back to the way it was before and the way it is now! I want things to be the way they were after we came back from the conference. I want things to be like that all the time. We were a family unit. That is what I want!"

He can get away with saying it

The above scenario reminds me of a family conference I attended some time ago. The main speaker was David Freeman, professor, author and clinical director of Pacific Coast Family Therapy Training Association, who urged young family men to work harder to catch up to the developmental pace of their spouse. He cautioned the men not to treat their marriages and families as a sideline but become an involved partner and parent. He told the audience he could *get away with saying this because he was male.*

At the time I wondered if that comment was helpful because more than 60 per cent of the audience were female psychotherapists. On the other hand, I thought, men have been advising women in areas of theology, psychology, psychiatry and medicine for hundreds of years. Furthermore, a recent researcher has found one of the dynamics of a *successful* marital relationship is the amount of influence the wife has with her husband.

Life is change; growth is optional

Men and women in their twenties and thirties, face a variety of challenges in their psychosocial development. Often the man's world becomes more focused as his work demands loyalty and attention. At the same time a woman's life becomes more varied as she continues to be involved in work as well as raise a family. Consequently, Dr. Freeman urges men to *challenge* themselves to be involved in family life, which ultimately brings maturational rewards.

This is not easy. Most of us tend to walk the road of least resistance. However, Dr. Freeman is very clear; life is change; growth is optional; *choose wisely*!

Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C.

So close, and yet so far away

Intangible Things
Heidi VanDerSlikke

From where I stood in the lobby I could smell the ocean breeze and see the tourists lounging by the pool. The lineup ahead of me made little progress as a couple of hotel staff members registered one guest at a time. Our family had left home about 12 hours earlier and boarded a plane full of Canadians escaping winter for a week in the Dominican Republic.

Typing in time to music

Children fidgeted beside their parents. The man in front of me collapsed into a nearby chair, while his wife shifted restlessly in line. Caribbean music wailed cheerfully from overhead speakers. The man behind the counter tapped information into the computer in time to the music. He began swaying his hips and rhythmically moving his shoulders. He did a few samba steps over to the printer, where he retrieved the receipt with a great flourish, just as the song ended. Smiling, he handed the paper to the guest and then signaled the next person to step up.

Moving forward I caught a glimpse of my own slightly cranky face in a mirror on the wall. What a contrast to the happy expression of the clerk. I marveled that he could look at a whole lobby full of tired, hungry travelers and still be dancing behind the counter.

Jack stroked my arm as I mumbled something about vaulting over the desk and checking myself in. He hoped out loud that instead I might relax and enjoy the moment at hand. The kids snickered at my vow to have the hotel running efficiently by the end of our holiday. When Mr. Mambo beckoned me to the counter, I did my best to be pleasant.

Dominican minutes

Eventually I learned to appreciate the "Dominican minute," as I called it. In my estimation it converted at roughly the same rate as the currency, only in reverse: 10 Canadian minutes to one Dominican momento.

At the end of the week we returned home suntanned and refreshed, but with a good deal of winter still ahead of us. I began earnestly waiting for spring.

I realize that I am always waiting for something. In the process I often overlook the blessings of the present.

For instance, as I write, spring has just started. A few dirty patches of snow persist on the lawn. The trees are bare, but beginning to swell ever so slightly. I find myself waiting for the time when the flowers will bloom, or when I can finally go out and sit by the pool for the afternoon. Whether I enjoy today, or simply endure it, I cannot change the fact that everything takes place in due time. What I do have a choice about is whether to waste the day waiting for tomorrow or to spend it being thankful for today.

Waiting faithfully

Easter is approaching. Christians the world over will commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ as an atonement for our sins. We will celebrate his resurrection from the dead and look forward to his return. In the meantime, we're supposed to wait. Luke 18:8 asks, "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he really find faith on the earth?" (NKJV).

It isn't enough just to put in our time. We're supposed to wait faithfully. We're supposed to be people who look forward to something wonderful, but who are also thankful right here, right now — regardless of our circumstances.

So my mind goes back to the dancing desk clerk. I want to learn from his attitude. Even if I'm facing a day full of challenges and endless work, even if life threatens to dampen my spirits, I want to hear the voice of God above it all. I want to move to the beat of a different drum, so to speak, and celebrate the moments God has given me.

Happy Easter!

Heidi VanderSlikke lives on a farm in Harriston, Ont.

DYKSTRA BROS. ROOFING
(1992) LTD.
Free Estimates
R.R. #1 Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0
Fax: 905-563-0301
Marty: 905-563-7374
Chuck: 905-646-0199

Attention Subscribers and Advertisers!!

Our **summer schedule** has been adjusted to allow for staff vacation time.

Our newly revised schedule is as follows:

Issue Dates	Deadlines
June 9	May 27
June 23	June 10
July 7	June 24
July 28	July 2
Aug. 11	July 29
Aug. 25	Aug. 12
Sep. 8	Aug. 26

Poetry

Meditations on the book of Genesis
At the threshold of the Sistine Chapel

1. The First Beholder

In Him we live and move and have our being,
says Paul at the Areopagus in Athens —
Who is He?
He is like an ineffable space which embraces all.
He, the Creator, embraces everything, summoning to existence from nothing,
not only from the beginning, but always.
Everything endures continually becoming.
In the beginning was the Word, and through Him all things were made.
The mystery of the beginning is born together with the Word and
is revealed through the Word.

The Word — eternal vision and utterance.
He, who was creating, saw — saw that it was good,
his seeing different from ours.
He the first Beholder
saw, finding in everything some trace of his Being, his own fullness.
He saw: "Omnia nuda et aperta sunt ante oculos Eius"
(Everything is disclosed and revealed before his eyes)
Naked, transparent,
true, good and beautiful

He saw in terms so different from ours.
Eternal vision and eternal utterance:
In the beginning was the Word, and through Him all things were made,
all in which we live and move and have our being
The Word, the marvellous eternal Word
as an invisible threshold
of all that has come into being, exists or will exist.
As if the Word were the threshold.
The threshold of the Word, containing the invisible form of everything,
divine and eternal
beyond this threshold everything begins to happen!

I stand at the entrance to the Sistine
Perhaps all this could be said more simply
in the language of the Book of Genesis
But the Book awaits the image. And rightly so. It was waiting
for its Michelangelo.
The One who created saw — saw that it was good.
He saw, and so the Book awaited the fruit of vision.
O all you who see, come
I am calling you, all beholders in every age.
I am calling you, Michelangelo!
There is in the Vatican a chapel that awaits the harvest of your vision!
The vision awaited the image.
From when the Word became flesh, the vision is waiting.
We are standing at the threshold of the Book.

It is the Book of the origins Genesis.
Here, in this chapel, Michelangelo penned it,
not with words, but with the richness
of piled-up colors.

We enter in order to read it again,
going from wonder to wonder.

So then, it is here we look and recognize
the Beginning which emerged out of nothingness,
obedient to the creative Word.
Here it speaks from these walls.
But still more powerfully the End speaks.
Yes, the Judgment is even more outspoken:
the Judgment, the Final one.
This is the path that all must follow,
every one of us.

2. Image and Likeness

God created man in his image,
male and female he created them
and God saw that it was very good.
Naked they were and did not feel shame.

ROLF SCHOTT, *MICHELANGELO*

The Last Judgment — *A detail of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel artwork.*

Was it possible?
Do not ask those who are contemporary, but ask Michelangelo
(and perhaps the contemporaries as well!?).
Ask the Sistine.
How much is said here, on these walls!

The beginning is invisible. Everything here points to it.
All this abundant visibility, released by human genius.
And the End too is invisible,
though here, traveller, your eyes are caught by the vision of the Last Judgment.
How make the invisible visible,
how penetrate beyond the bounds of good and evil?
The Beginning and the End, invisible, pierce us from these walls.

He

In Him we live and move and have our being.
Is He only the space of the existence of those who exist?

He is the Creator.
Making all and sustaining it in existence, he holds everything.
He makes by likeness.

When the apostle Paul preaches at the Areopagus,
his words reflect the whole tradition of the Covenant.
Each day ended there with the words:
And God saw that it was good.

He saw and found a trace of his Essence
He found his own splendor in everything visible.
The primordial Word is as it were the threshold
beyond which we live and move and have our being.

The above is an excerpt from Pope John Paul II's poetic meditations* Roman Triptych. *It is taken from Part II, "Meditations on the Book of Genesis at the Threshold of the Sistine Chapel." They appear for the first time without a pseudonym with the permission of the Vatican Press (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, lev@publish.va).

Easter

Easter: new life under the cross

Harry der Nederlanden

Here in Ontario we were in the grip of a cold spell that didn't relax its hold till the second-last weekend in March. Hardly a hint of spring before that.

The first warm day my wife Rose and I went hiking on the asphalt trail along the Niagara River. The sudden thaw made creeks and gullies overflow and flooded roads and paths in numerous places. While in some spots several centimeters of water flowed over the trail, in others the ice and slush made walking treacherous. When we parked, a couple of men were sitting on a picnic table wringing out their socks.

This did not deter walkers, however, as everywhere people spilled out of cars, turned their faces to the warm sun, took deep, appreciative breaths, and set off along the river. Every few minutes you'd see another stroller stop to peel off his coat and fling it over his shoulder. Others peeled off sweaters to tie them around their waists. Everyone you met had the look of someone who has been hiding underground for days and has just emerged into the daylight and fresh air. The look is a blend of liberation, eagerness, anticipation, affirmation.

How Christians feel at Easter

"This is how Christians feel at Easter," I thought. There is something very right about celebrating Easter at springtime, when the earth and the trees and flowers are stirring with new life, and we, too, shake off our winter torpor and also feel the sap rising in every tissue of our being. At this time of the year, we northerners are all creation-order theologians. We all suck the smells of new life deep into our lungs as if the air itself is the Holy Spirit and simply to breathe is to be inspired. The creation affirms the life in us and every cell in our bodies cries out Amen! to the goodness, the virtue and beauty of the earth that surrounds us and sustains us.

The image of the groundhog emerging from his dark burrow blinking in the mellow sunshine and mild spring air blends with the image of the believer emerging from the dark tomb of death's prison into a new world redeemed by the risen Christ. This experience is at the very heart of our faith. Baptism symbolizes our rising from death to life with Christ, and the Lord's Supper is a feasting together on the good things of the new heaven and the new earth. Death has been overcome, so it is right and fitting that this experience of joy and exuberance and triumph is central to the Christian faith.

Afraid still of death's excruciating sting

But as we watch the crocuses and tulips thrust their green spears out of the dark earth and as we walk under trees whose buds are ripe and ready to explode, we are reminded of death and ruin in Iraq and of masked nurses bending over hospital beds while relatives wait, afraid still of death's excruciating sting.

We do not leave the cross behind at Easter, and spring, too, is but a season.

But isn't the life we celebrate at Easter eternal life? Isn't Christ's resurrection the conquest of death? Perhaps to link the new life in Christ so closely with our experience of earthly, bodily life is a mistake. Perhaps it has little or nothing to do with the sap rising in the trees, robins and finches splashing in puddles, and the yearning of young men and women stretching out side by side on soft lawns. Perhaps we should speak of spiritual realities instead – of atonement and propitiation, of sacrifice and reconciliation, of judgment and ransom.

Celebrating gift of new, full life

The Bible gives us many different images of what God has done for us in sending his Son to live with us for a season and then to die in our place. One such cluster, as I've suggested, celebrates the gift of new, full life. But Christ is also the light that enlightens us so that we know God and ourselves and see this creation for what it really is.

And Jesus Christ is also the one who comes to set his people free, to redeem them from slavery and from the house of bondage. Yes, the gospel is also a theology of liberation and Jesus is our liberator.

In him, too, we are reconciled, not just with God, but also with one another. We are engrafted into the body of Christ, reborn into the new humanity, into the community formed by his blood. The new life we are given is not that of the solitary individual but a life in community, a life that is shared and that binds us into ever larger networks of peoples.

United once again

But this communion is not just with other human beings, for our Savior is the cosmic Christ who restores all things to their created end. So we are united once again with this earth and all God's creatures in anticipation of the new heaven and the new earth that are part of his retinue when he returns.

He is the Word that broke into our time to give us a new beginning and a new future, restoring the trajectory and the rhythms of time. Now the past is no longer a heavy burden and the future no longer an emptiness, for the future comes to us on gentle, wounded feet.

Hallelujah, he is coming. Hallelujah, he is here. He is our story; he is our song. The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.

Life, light, liberty

Life, light, liberty – these are gifts for earthly, bodily, social beings. Community, nature, history – these are not just spiritual realities but the bonds and relationships of material beings. The cross does not divorce us from these realities but returns us to them.

But on a new basis.

Our license to rule with the risen Lord is stamped with blood, a crude thing to do for a God who is love and light and peace. We moderns, we Westerners have a hard time understanding the need for something so... barbaric.

When Christ was nailed to the cross, he was put there by the authority of the Roman magistrate, at the insistence of the Jewish Sanhedrin and with the concurrence of Hellenic culture. The caption on the ironic scene staged by Pilate read, in Greek and Hebrew, "King of the Jews." Pilate, of course, said vastly more than he knew.

Warp, woof and pattern of our civilization

The three great cultural powers that promised to put people in touch with the source of life and order in the cosmos – the political power of Rome, the ethical order of Israel and the intellectual vision of Greece – judged the King of peace, the Word of life, the light of the world to be of no value, a nuisance, something to be destroyed. In this judgment, they revealed the violence at the heart of their respective ideals of justice, morality and truth. These three are the warp, woof and pattern of our civilization.

When we humans, armed with the best of intentions and the highest ideals, set out to establish justice, morality and truth on this earth, we tend to ride roughshod over people. Even those things we see as good, as the things that make life worth living, often turn into tyrants in the process.

The ruler or the state, for example, is indispensable for ordering our life together to safeguard the benefits of civilization. Yet, again and again that same institution has turned into a bloody tyrant. In fact, for most of human history the state has functioned like a bloodthirsty god who demands repeated sacrifices. That demonic history still haunts government today, even in the Western democracies.

The Trinity – *an engraving by Albrecht Durer.*

Fruits of the cross

We have learned to fence in that power to protect ourselves and to limit its tendency to tyranny. We may, I believe, see such limiting structures as fruits of the cross. The cross has taught us that we cannot treat the powers we've been given to transform the earth and human society as though they are natural forces that flow through us as the sap flows through the apple tree to make it bloom and bear fruit. Because of the Fall, any and all tapping of the powers of creation, whether artistic or political, must pass through the cross of Christ, for all power in heaven and in earth has been given to him and to him alone.

The exercise of power, then, passes through a detour: all authority must first die to the temptation to enthrone it and make itself the final judge. To rule and to work under the shadow of the cross and under the resurrection sun, we must cast all our handiworks into the crucible of God's judgment. There our works as well as ourselves are sifted and undergo continual conversion, for we wrestle not first of all with flesh and blood but with principalities and powers that threaten to turn the good we would do into evil.

But we do not surrender the good things of this earth. We do not give up on this struggle, for the renewal of our lives is bound up with all things in the wide embrace of the Redeemer, who is the life, the way and the truth, and who promises to make all things new by the power of his blood.

Why go to church? 18

To find rest

A. A. van Ruler

We have touched on the idea that we go to church to find rest, in several earlier articles and in different contexts. Here we will gather these different meanings and develop them. Above all, we will also try to give them unity and coherence. In any case, we will give them separate treatment as a distinct motive for going to church.

At first glance, this topic is closely related to the last two, for among other things Sunday is a day of rest and the church year is comprised of such special days. So it looks like only a small step to our new theme – the rest we seek in church.

I won't deny that there's a certain logic in this; nevertheless, I want to remind you that when we discussed Sunday and the church calendar, we were dealing with large objective realities that exist outside of and over against ourselves. Here I want to look at the same thing from the other side – from the side of subjective inwardness. Our reflections will now circle around our inner rest.

Withdraw from all this

Let's begin with the most obvious: the hectic pace of modern times. All week we are intensely involved with our work. The traffic roars past on either side. The stresses and strains of our society never stop. The mass media assault our senses, the crises of global politics occupy our minds, and the problems of our own family lives, large and small, tug at us. But on Sunday mornings we simply withdraw from all this for a moment. The church in some ways always resembles a monastery, even a monastery with vows of silence.

In a previous context, we emphasized the fact that when we go to church we bring the world with us. But we added that we do so to carry it before God and really to turn it over to him. In this way, we in a sense also part with it. But we can also say that for an hour or so we retreat from the world. We go to church and there we leave everything behind. We unwind and come to rest.

No better place to seek rest

There's no better place to seek rest than in the church. There are even people who always sleep in church, at least during the sermon. Is it frivolous of me to say this and to think of the text, "He gives to his beloved sleep?" Maybe we can also go to church to sleep.

There's another possibility. You can be in such a state of mind that you let everything that happens in the worship service pass you by, whether deliberately or because you are powerless to do otherwise. You are simply not an active participant. Is there a faithful churchgoer who hasn't experienced this at some time or other? Your heart can be wooden and so filled with despair that you just don't want to or maybe you can't. Then the rest you find in church is purely an objective kind of rest. You still go, however, because you know that this is the place to find genuine rest. However, it merely hovers over you like a mother bending over her child in its crib singing a lullaby.

Pinnacle of human action

I don't want to rule this possibility out, even though it contradicts the nature of worship. In the worship service, if everything is as it ought to be, we reach the pinnacle of human action – the sacred work of praise. But what if a person is in such a spiritual state that he simply cannot participate? Is it then reprehensible if he leaves it to others? He may not take an active part, but he can still be part of it. In the process he may even be resuscitated: his heart has stopped but because it is being massaged eventually it may begin to beat once again.

This contrasts sharply with why people often came to church in earlier times. Long ago people often came to church not to find rest but to find excitement, to break the boredom. Life was often unvarying and dreary, so everyone went to church just to experience something different. Nowadays that motive has largely vanished, except perhaps for some elderly persons.

When most people were farmers, the days were filled with work and people didn't see much of one another. Church was an opportunity to visit with everyone else and to talk. It was a little like the weekly marketplace or the yearly fair.

Church still has social function

The church still has such a social function and it is becoming more important nowadays. Many churches even have a coffee time after the service. There is a lot of loneliness in our mass society, perhaps even more than when people lived long distances from one another.

There are other reasons people may go to church looking for rest. A person may be restless inwardly because of some traumatic event in his life that has shocked him to the roots of his existence and plunged him into grief and suffering.

BAKER BOOK HOUSE

"In the church service we become a flock that is led together to grassy meadows and beside still waters. And what do we do there? We lie down and bask in the sun. We find rest in the repose of redeemed being."

He no longer knows where to turn. His friends and acquaintances can't seem to help him out of the pit. He doesn't want to go to a therapist. So he turns to the church. Perhaps he will find comfort there and again find rest for his soul.

If we find ourselves in this situation, we are going to church out of an inner need. We feel that we need it.

I have no wish to disparage this motive. On the contrary. Life's hard knocks can plunge us into such deep sorrow that we will reach out to whatever will lift us out of the pit. So of course we will reach out for the gospel and the liturgy.

However, we must not, as is often done, pretend that this is the ideal churchgoer. It is often said that church is only really worthwhile if we go out of inner need. But this is a terrible distortion. Do we have to be at our wit's end before our churchgoing is genuine?

Worldly restlessness

Besides being driven to church by psychological restlessness, we can also be driven to church by worldly restlessness. This happens when we are preoccupied not so much with our own problems but with those of the world around us. This can cause us so many worries that we become exhausted. We turn to the church because it gives us a place of rest over against the tumult of the world.

What is happening to our world? We ask this question in numerous variations. What global forces are at work in the Middle East or in China? Or what is happening to the moral life of people? Are we losing our moral standards? What has happened to our civility, to the way we behave toward one another in society? What about our environment? Where is our technology taking us? Are we crossing ethical boundaries? Are we going places we should not be going? Even our scientists are asking these questions.

Some Christians feel we are now in an apocalyptic time, headed toward the Great Babylon which wants nothing to do with God. In such a culture there is a concentration and increase of unrighteousness which will inevitably lead to a huge explosion.

Who's in charge of the world? Who can stop it? We can't very well bail out. But we can withdraw for a while – by going to church. When the minister gives the greeting, we shake off all these anxieties.

Raising issues that disturb us

But then it's terribly frustrating to come to church to be confronted by a progressive preacher who disturbs us by raising all these issues that disturb us. Often such preachers act as if they are the only ones concerned about these issues and that it is their job to shake the rest of us awake to the pressing problems of the world. It's an occupational disease often picked up at conferences.

The preacher's task, however, is to proclaim the gospel. Not just the gospel that declares the redemption of the individual, but also the gospel that says, 'Do not be afraid, for I have overcome the world, and to me has been given every authority, whether in heaven or on earth.'

When we reflect on the enormous problems facing the world, we are also forced to look at ourselves. What is the source of all this evil? Is it located only in the world, in others, in social structures or in the processes of history? Or is it located first of all in our own hearts? We are, after all, still sinners.

Heart-rending sense of depravity

That's a realization that fills us with fear and trembling. In our time, however, most people don't seem to be bothered by that idea. This was very different in the 16th century. In those days huge parts of the population were stricken by their guilt; they were deeply uneasy about their sins. Luther underwent this crisis: "How do I find a gracious God?" he cried. But this same question must have plagued many, for his message found receptive ears everywhere. The same sort of thing happened in the Great Awakening of the early 18th century and the Reveil of the 19th century. People had a deep, heart-rending sense of the utter depravity of human nature and that they were lost.

Is this no longer possible? Perhaps not on such a large scale, but in our day isn't it especially the individual who is disquieted in his inner self? This disquiet ultimately drives people to madness or suicide – or to church. And when he comes to church, he is looking for two things. First, to plumb his own sinfulness to its very ground. He wants to fully experience and realize what he is as a sinner — standing guilty and lost before eternity. Then he wants to receive salvation, to be rescued and set free; he wants atonement for his guilt and forgiveness for his sins. He wants to be saved from eternal perdition. This sets him free, gives him room to

breathe; he is liberated.

The deeper one breathes this freedom, the more he is filled with rest.

Accepting ourselves and our world

This is the way to find rest in church – by recognizing our sins and receiving salvation. So to go to church to find rest is a worthy motive. It is nothing less than to find rest in the fact that we are sinners. That may be a strange way of putting it, but it is not far off the mark. We learn to accept ourselves and our world in all their dreadfulness.

But the forgiveness of sin gives us rest not just with regard to evil. Deep underneath there is something else that can also make our conscience uneasy – the human self.

I am here. I am myself. My conscience can also take the form of consciousness, and consciousness is always self-consciousness. As a human being, I may know that I am and that I am a self.

Can this awareness be accompanied by the same sort of dread as the discovery that I am a sinner? For a person to seize hold of himself is even harder than to hold on to a bird struggling to get away. Some are seized by anxiety about being oneself or about simply being.

In God's hands

Can I, the creature, take my self into my own hands? Don't I rather belong in the hands of God? In fact, isn't God the only one who can hold us in his hands?

Nevertheless, self-consciousness confronts us with these dilemmas. And we go to church also with an eye to them, and to find rest in this respect, as well. In fact, we might say that church is precisely the place we come to rest, simply because it puts us where we belong – in the hands of the Creator.

We can, of course, be in his hands anywhere and everywhere. We can even be aware of that fact at all times, although that's not very likely. Still, there are two reasons we need to go to church. First, because we are prone to forget that we are in God's hands, and we need to be constantly reminded of it. This happens in the worship service. But even if we never needed reminding, we would wish to give visible expression to that awareness by going to church.

Church and world, liturgy and life are, after all, two different things. Although they are closely related, they remain distinct. In fact, they retain a certain strangeness over toward one another. No matter how godly and gracious I am in the daily conduct of my life in the world, it remains part of a godly and good life to also go to church. That is where I belong and come to terms, to rest with myself, with the fact that I am and that I am here.

NSMU.EDU

"To cling to this rest is to hang our temporal existence wholly on eternity, like a hammock suspended between two trees."

This brings together two extremes – the most inward and the most outward. The most inward is my conscience, whether as consciousness or as self-consciousness; and the most external is the church, not just as worship service but also as church building, as liturgical space. These two have here been brought together. The one needs the other; they are made for each other. In my conscience I become aware of myself, and when I see a church building, I tell myself, "That's where I belong." That's where my conscience finds rest.

Restlessness in self, rest in church

The restlessness I discern in myself and the rest I find in church converge in a wholly personal concern about my own eternal salvation. I ask, am I leading a life that is eternally lost or saved? This is about the life I am leading here and now, not about a life hereafter. The future is filled by the present, or at least, the eternal future is filled with temporal reality.

So when we ask about the hereafter and eternity we are talking about the lives we are leading now, but at the level of deepest seriousness. It can be an existence that is in and of itself lost, and then it is lost forever. It can also be an existence that in and of itself – through the Savior and by grace – is saved. And then it will also remain so forever.

Here we are talking about a wholly personal anxiety about our own eternal salvation. No one experienced this anxiety more deeply than Kierkegaard, called the father of existentialism. However, existentialism later rejected this anxiety as a betrayal of life.

But, on the contrary, those who no longer feel this anxiety can no longer live life to its deepest level. They enclose themselves in what is finite and no longer know the tremendous dimension that the infinite adds to the finite.

Anxiety about salvation

Meanwhile, however, the anxiety about our eternal salvation can create a restlessness deep within us that eats away relentlessly at us. It is no picnic to be so affected by the ultimate concerns of life. One of the great claims of the Christian church is that it has a cure for even this most serious of human sicknesses. We can find rest even for the anxiety about our eternal salvation. In fact, that's precisely what the gospel proclaimed and celebrated in the church is for.

To cling to this rest is to hang our temporal existence wholly on eternity, like a hammock suspended between two trees. Afterwards we tie the hammock of your temporal existence onto the eternal counsel of God. And then we tie the other end onto God's eternal kingdom. We know ourselves to be elect from eternity to eternity, and already here and now we have the beginning of eternal joy in our hearts.

We fasten the hammock of temporal life to eternity by going to church. We go to church to find eternal rest. Human existence becomes stretching out in a hammock.

So we look for rest in numerous ways. And how do we find it in church? What is it in church that gives us this rest?

We can name many different things. The element of entering something wholly other when we enter church is in itself already restful. Then there are the high ceilings of the building and the church's long history. We feel ourselves surrounded by many preceding generations and taken up into the vast space of a divine institution.

We carry one another

There is also the experience of being embraced in a close fellowship and receiving support from one another. We help carry one another through the storms of life and world, of time and eternity, of evil and salvation, of being and of the self.

Again and again, I discover that what is going on in church concerns my very self, the deepest things of my existence, my heart. Even the most intimate talks between friends seldom penetrate to this level. The gospel and the liturgy turn me completely inside out. Here I not only utter myself from my innermost depths, but I am fully uttered.

Moreover, here all the causes of our restlessness are brought into the light of eternity. In fact, we discover the light of eternity in all things. Here we see God's rule. Here we see salvation in Christ. Here we see God's kingdom. What more could anyone possibly want?

Why is my soul so disquieted within me? Why is it downcast as if in grief? Let my soul rather find its joy in the praises of the Almighty, my Savior and my God!

In the church service we become a flock that is led together to grassy meadows and beside still waters. And what do we do there? We lie down and bask in the sun. We find rest in the repose of redeemed being.

Christian mysticism includes realism

It is all a mysticism infused with light. Through the preaching of the Word and the liturgy, we are led by meditation on what we hear to find this mystical rest, while at the same time remaining radical realists, for we continue to see things as they are. Christian mysticism does not exclude a rugged realism but includes it. The gospel shrinks back from nothing, recognizes everything, terrible though it may be.

We might also put it his way: in and through the church we receive peace, a peace in and with everything. It is truly a peace that passes understanding. It is the peace of the cross. Everything that is is rational, but it is the rationality of the cross. The rest that we receive is, therefore, the rest of Saturday stillness, the stillness of the grave in which the Lord of life, our Redeemer, is resting. And therefore that rest is also the rest of hope, of waiting, of eschatological expectation. Paul makes bold to speak of the peace of God which will guard our hearts and our minds.

This does not, of course, bring us to the heart of the gospel, which is the gospel of Easter, of Christ's resurrection from the dead. To this the only adequate response is joy.

But can we stay on this high level permanently? Perhaps to simply overcome the unrest in our hearts and to find peace in the full and deep sense we have just described is no little thing.

We might also say: in the church we find rest in the realization that we are utterly dependent on God. We hang on his sovereign majesty, which is free and kind toward us.

Rest and submission

In other words, our rest can take the form of submission. This word has acquired a negative connotation among us, especially in connection with social issues. The church has been accused of preaching submission and thereby keeping the oppressed of the earth in their place. Whether and to what extent this is true, I won't try to answer here. Often the answers given have been one-sided and superficial.

But let's suppose for a moment that all submission on the political level is bad: does this rule out submission in all senses? Can we live without any form of submission? Is life not filled with all sorts of suffering to which we can only submit? Take ageing and the fact that one day we must die – what can we do with regard to these things except submit?

Everything does depend on how we understand submission and experience it in our hearts. For believers, submission must be related to surrender. We must come to the point where we surrender our entire existence to God, for he is the Lord of life and death. This surrender to God is not, however, a merger with God. Although we must surrender ourselves to him, we remain ourselves.

We surrender ourselves in two ways. By our submission: we affirm reality and accept it as God has made it and as God carries it out (the sheep beside still waters). But surrender also involves perseverance. We live under the promises of God, looking forward to the total redemption of the world. To that end in our lifetime we share the whole counsel of God, meanwhile doing what we can.

We come to the point of submission and surrender by going to church to find rest there. It is a bridge to God.

A time for everything

Building Trust
Vicky Van Andel Ed.

SKJOLD PHOTOGRAPH

All three women obviously have led very different lives. Yet we had much in common too. We all married, had jobs, and wanted children.

There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven.
Ecclesiastes 3:1

Standing there, looking at the harbor scene in front of me, I realized that there are people in Canada who are blessed with incredibly beautiful scenery in very early spring. I was in Victoria, British Columbia in early March. The trees were in full bloom and daffodils and crocuses were bursting forth everywhere. The air had a moist, earthy cedar fragrance about it. The sight was awesome and made a conscious imprint on my mind.

I heard a sea plane take off and seagulls squeal. I saw boats of various shapes and sizes gently sailing out to sea, leaving in their wake interesting wave patterns, each one different. The waves reminded me of my husband's fascination with waves. He can spend a long time studying waves created by stones pitched on water or by jumping fish. It took me awhile to connect his passion to his work in physics. He studied waves by shooting laser beams into hot gases (as part of experiments trying to duplicate the way the sun gets its energy, as a possible alternative energy source to be used on earth).

Three women compare stories

I was also reminded of similarities between boats sailing out to sea and people living out their lives. Like boats, people's lives move forward at different speeds, leaving behind different waves. I thought of this similarity because just the day before I had met two women at a social function. We were drawn to each other almost immediately and, standing in a circle, shared the story of our lives.

One woman had grown up in a small family in Toronto, graduated from university and worked as a publishing consultant for many years. She knew many well-known Canadian writers, including the author of a new book I was carrying in my suitcase, *The Romantic* by Barbara Gowdy (a side topic of conversation). She had loved her career and married later in life because "I did not meet the right partner until I was in my forties." She had not been able to have children, which saddened her. She was no longer employed but was dedicated to supporting her husband in his work. "I have had a good life," she said. "I have learned a lot along the way and am happy to be where I am at this stage in my life."

Restless in tightly-knit community

The second woman had grown up in Nova Scotia. She was tenth in a family of 13 children. All her siblings still lived in the town where they were born. She had felt restless as a child and longed to move away from the tightly knit community of her birth. Her teachers encouraged her to go to university, and she became the only child in her family to do so. After graduating, she worked as an accountant, married her husband and they had a son and a daughter. She took a few years off work to care for the children and then resumed her career. She was a pleasant and capable woman in her early forties who appeared content with her life. She expressed one longing, "My family in Nova Scotia doesn't understand me anymore. I am far away. My life has developed so differently from theirs."

I listened to their stories and shared my own. I married soon after high school and our five children were born before I was 30. All along I felt a longing within myself to grow as a person separately from but intertwined with my roles as wife and mother. I believed these roles to be the most important tasks any woman could fulfil, and prayed every day for wisdom to do it right. As the children grew up, I started taking courses at the university which added the dimension to my life I needed. After graduating, I began a career in nursing and still love it.

All three women obviously have led very different lives. Yet we had much in common too. We all married, had jobs, and wanted children. The difference between us is the order in which these events occurred in our lives. In the end, though, we all seemed satisfied with the way our lives had unfolded. At the same time, we all expressed losses too, something that we felt we had missed out on, a dream or a desire. But we seemed to have come to terms with it. Or perhaps, as in the case of the woman missing her family, were still coming to terms.

Women share one area in life unique to their gender alone. They have a biological predisposition to bear children. Children are a focal point in the lives of women. It is the bearing of children that can greatly influence the pattern in which their lives unfold. Sometimes we choose this pattern, other times the pattern just happens.

The path our life takes

The path our life takes depends not only on the choices we make but also on the experiences we have. Much can happen that is beyond our control. Having children means meeting someone to marry. Some women find a partner early in life, others later and still others never. Traumatic experiences can impair our ability to find a clear direction in life. The loss of someone we love can transform us in ways we never imagined. Illness changes our path too in ways we would not have envisioned.

That's why each person's life and wave pattern turns out differently. But it's not really important in what order things happen or we do things. What counts is that we learn to understand what is happening in our lives. That we learn to accept the things we can't control. That we find meaning in the situations we find ourselves in. That we learn to understand what God is telling us. Life is more a journey than a destination. Each step of that journey offers new opportunities. Much of life can't be fixed but it can always remain a challenging mystery to be unraveled.

As women create their paths through life in different ways and at different speeds, they do it amidst the people they love. It's God who keeps them on course as they travel the highways and the byways.

And yes, people who do not live in Victoria during the month of March have reason for envy! But then, all places in Canada have their own merits, even the cold winters of Alberta....

Vicky Van Andel is the editor of this column. Anyone who would like to contribute to this column is invited to contact her via fax at: 1-780-473-0970, or by e-mail at: **vanandel@oanet.com**

Wrapped knuckles

By Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

Don't shake
your ugly fist at me,
Death.
Don't threaten me
with damning despair.
He's wrapped your knuckles
in the burial cloth,
the folded linen
laying there.

Indian Christians distressed by passage of anti-conversion law in Gujarat

Anto Akkara

NEW DELHI, India (ENI) — Churches in India have expressed shock over the enactment of a controversial law curbing religious conversion that passed without debate in the legislative assembly of the state of Gujarat.

Called the Freedom of Religious Conversion Bill, the legislation provides for three years' imprisonment and a fine of 50,000 rupees ($1,000 Can) for religious conversion by "force or by lure." Even a conversion recognized as not having been coerced could bring a one-year prison sentence and a fine, if it did not receive prior approval from the head of the district.

The legislation was "an act of conscious and wilful harassment of the minorities, especially Christians, prohibiting them from practicing their faith," said the National Council of Churches in India, which groups 29 Orthodox and Protestant Churches.

"Conversion is a grace of God and cannot be subject to the scrutiny of the civil government," said the ecumenical, Gujarat-based United Christian Forum for Human Rights in a statement.

Tabling the bill before the state legislature on March 22, the Gujarat deputy home minister, Amit Shah, claimed that "reports have been received that conversions from one religion to another are made by use of force or allurement or by fraudulent means."

The bill, Shah said, would act as a "deterrent against the anti-social and vested interest groups exploiting innocent people belonging to the depressed classes."

Christian groups, however, maintain that the state's relatively small Christian population — just more than half of one per cent of the approximately 50 million people in Gujarat — has remained static for decades.

News

Colombian Christians seek peace in former 'demilitarized zone'

David Miller

MIAMI (Compass) — Last year a band of guerrilla fighters of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) hijacked a commuter jet, forced it to land and kidnapped one of the passengers — Senator Jorge Gechem Turbay, a key government spokesman in negotiations aimed at ending Colombia's long-running civil war.

The brazen kidnapping was the straw that broke the proverbial camel's back for the government, which had been trying to negotiate a peace accord with the rebels for four years. Since then the Colombian military has been trying to expel the insurgents from the special "demilitarized zone" they occupied in the southern department of Caquetá.

Rebels given control

Pastrana, the former president of Colombia, had ceded the 15,000 square-mile enclave to FARC in January 1999 as a good faith gesture to promote a peaceful solution to the 38-year-old conflict. He ordered national police and army units out of the zone, leaving FARC in virtual control of the civilian population.

From the start, the unusual concession invited criticism, particularly from Alvaro Uribe, Colombia's current president, who won office last year by promising tougher measures against the insurgents.

"Demilitarized zones have been bad luck for Colombia," Uribe said in a January interview with Bogota's *El Tiempo* newspaper, pledging that no armed group will receive any such favor as long as he is president. Many war-weary Colombians agree with Uribe and hope the military buildup underway since he took office in May will ultimately defeat the rebels and restore peace.

Evangelicals neutral

Evangelical Christians in Colombia, however, are conspicuously neutral on the issue of using military force to achieve peace. As troops moved into the demilitarized zone last year, the Commission for Human Rights and Peace of the Evangelical Council of Colombia (CEDECOL) issued a public statement expressing "sadness" over the "advancing military operations."

"We renew our commitment to help in the construction of a culture of reconciliation and peace … from the Christian perspective of nonviolence as the response demanded by the gospel of Jesus Christ."

One 9/11 attack per year

Whatever their religious persuasion, Colombians are desperate to end the bloody conflict. Amnesty International calculates that since the mid-1980s, the war has claimed 60,000 lives, 80 per cent of them civilians who died in terrorist attacks or cold-blooded massacres. Putting it into perspective, it means that Colombia, a country one-seventh the size of the U.S., has suffered the equivalent of a 9/11 assault every year for the past 15 years.

In fact, more than half (55 per cent) of the terrorist attacks committed worldwide each year occur in this nation of 40 million. Colombia holds another unenviable world record: kidnapping. Nearly 4,000 persons are abducted each year, accounting for 45 per cent of the total kidnappings in the world.

Only one of every 25 Colombians is an evangelical Christian, but CEDECOL leaders estimate that 40 per cent of them face severe danger, mostly because of the growth of churches in isolated "red zones" where illegal armed groups operate. Since 1998, 400 churches have been closed in those areas and more than 70 pastors assassinated.

Evangelicals at special risk

Evangelical congregations in the former demilitarized zone are at particular risk, due to the collapse of public security as the army attempts to uproot FARC forces and re-establish government control. Insurgents have destroyed electric grids, telephone lines and major bridges, creating critical shortages of food, drinking water and medicines.

Add to those hardships the terror of sudden abduction, torture and murder, and the picture of daily life in the zone emerges all too clearly.

Over a two-month period at the end of 2002, the San Vicente del Caguán-based Christians for Peace Foundation documented 17 civilian murders in five local communities. Mutilated corpses were sometimes found in garbage dumps or floating in the Caguán River. One victim, a 13-year-old girl, was raped by her murderers.

These cases do not include the assassination of four pastors the Foundation documented during the same period. Nor did the report speculate as to how many of the victims died at the hands of guerrillas, who suspect local people of providing intelligence information to the army, or how many were killed for collaborating with the insurgents.

Don't abandon us

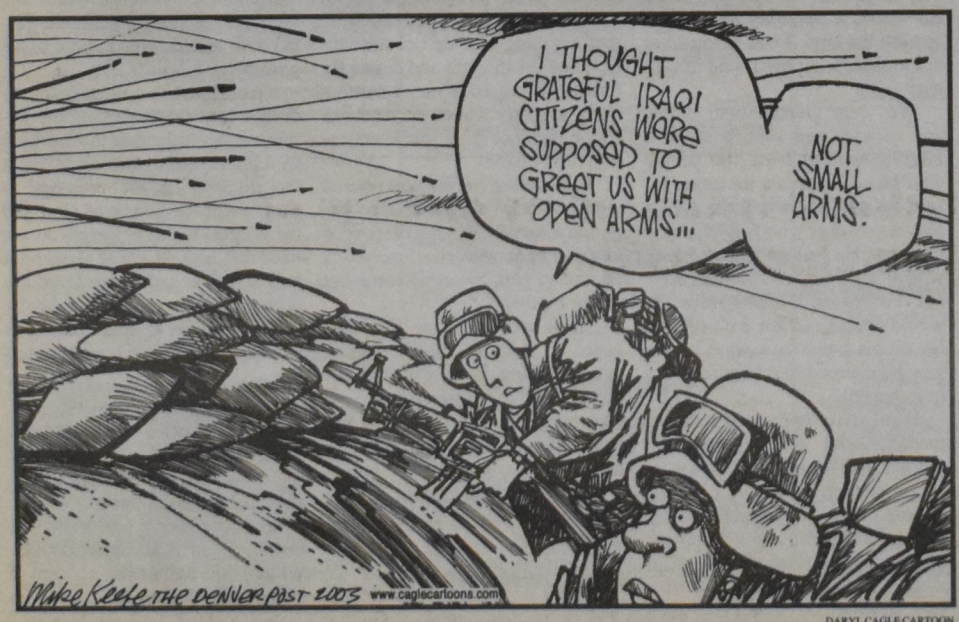
In an open letter circulated in January, Alfredo Torres Pachón of Christians for Peace appealed to Colombian officials and the international community not to abandon San Vicente in this critical time of peace-seeking.

"During the euphoria of the demilitarization, labor leaders, bankers, religious leaders of every creed, ambassadors of 21 countries, United Nations delegates, journalists and even the president of the New York Stock Exchange asked for landing rights in Caguán so they could dialogue with guerrilla representatives and have their picture taken," Torres wrote.

"Today, the mayor, the city council, state and banking organizations have all left. Nevertheless, there are still good people here, the majority of them hard-working and honest, who have not left and who will not leave."

Among those who will not leave is an evangelical pastor who lived through the extraordinary period of the demilitarized zone. He said the three-and-a-half year experience has deepened his prayer life, as well as that of believers in his congregation. And despite church closings and martyred pastors, evangelical leaders estimate that churches in the zone grew by 30 per cent during the FARC occupation.

That kind of news does not make headlines on reports out of San Vicente del Caguán these days, but it does provide a ray of hope to Colombians.


I THOUGHT GRATEFUL IRAQI CITIZENS WERE SUPPOSED TO GREET US WITH OPEN ARMS...
NOT SMALL ARMS.
Mike Keefe, THE DENVER POST 2003 www.caglecartoons.com

DARYL CAGLE CARTOON

Student Loans

Helping Canadian Christian students, in financial need, who attend Christian Colleges & High Schools.

- Interest free until graduation
- Donors to CEAF receive full tax receipt
- Large portion of loan is forgivable upon graduation
- Student(s) must be enrolled in an approved Christian College or High School
- Small administration fee

For a complete information package contact,
Mrs. Mynie Zondag

CEAF
CHRISTIAN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION
FIDDLERS GREEN POSTAL OUTLET
P.O. BOX 81120
ANCASTER, ONTARIO
L9G 4X2
TEL.: (905) 648-9899
FAX: (905) 648-2110
WWW.CEAF.CA
EMAIL: INFO@CEAF.CA

Opinion

'I command you, Satan, to come out....'

Multitudes come to Jesus for healing.

PIET KLAASSE ILLUSTRATION FROM *BIBLE FOR CHILDREN*

Ty Hofman

The reality or possibility of faith healing has been with our Reformed Christian community for more than 30 years, from its breaking forth in the days of Kathryn Kuhlman and other healers.

In those times the pages of *Calvinist Contact* were full of the pros and cons of going to the healers. Bus loads of CRCs went from Ontario to Boston to be exposed to the wonders of the lady healer. There were great stories of healing of those the doctors couldn't help. People were cured of cancer, in one case to die two weeks later.

Arguing issue of healing

Not only did we argue the issue of healing but the whole reality of how the Holy Spirit was being poured out in miraculous fashion, with the signs of tongue speaking and prophecy.

Those were heady times for some Reformed believers, ever excited to discover something new and powerful. Those who opposed them were sure it was not authentic and not good for the church.

Finally the editor blew the whistle on the aggressive exchanges. But every now and then a new wave of Spirit activity and healing would hit the churches and a new editor would have to draw the line again. But the interest in healing has not died.

There are still some who are firmly convinced that God can and does heal our diseases and we ought to expect him to do so. I count some of them my friends of long standing — more than 40 years as a matter of fact.

One of those friends in Calgary called me well along in 2002 to inform me that a friend of his, Rev. Bill Putnam of Montana, would be in Grand Rapids for ministry in a Christian Reformed church and suggested that if anyone I knew was in need of healing he/she would be advised to visit the Putnam meeting.

He didn't say right out that I should go there since he knows me well enough not to push me, but he subtly dangled the carrot in front of me. I thanked him and said I would look for his coming.

In great need of healing

There was no question that I was in great need of a lot of healing. But I'm not into faith healing. Why should God work a special miracle on an 80-year old when he allows so many children and young people to die who are also fervently prayed for? I've always been a bit of the mind that will not put God to the test.

The visit of Rev. Putnam coincided with the visit of Ed and Nett, my in-laws from Idaho. Ed is always good for a discussion of things marginal to the faith, so I told him about Putnam. To shorten the long story, we were soon on our way to the south end of Grand Rapids on a Saturday morning to spy out the land. I was going so as not to disappoint my friend in Calgary.

We were greeted with coffee and cookies and soon were in a meeting with at least 100 people who heard Putnam's message. He said he was not a faith healer — only a preacher who had a healing ministry. He had no showy forum with all the hoopla of the faith healers. Following the scriptures, he would preach, anoint with oil and lay on his hands and pray. In this way he claimed that hundreds had been healed.

I was quite impressed with his message and his persona. He seemed totally authentic, no hocus-pocus, no big promises, no denigration of the faithlessness of any not healed. It seemed to be our kind of man. I concluded if I'd ever go along with a prayer for "supernatural" healing, it would be with someone like Putnam.

During the break I introduced myself to him and told him something of my very distressing problem, a fast developing case of neuropathy, gradually robbing me of the use of my hands. I'd lost a lot of strength and feeling and had an ongoing sense of misery in both hands. I was beginning to have difficulty buttoning my clothes.

Then we lined up for the healing ministry. Since the line was getting longer and time was beginning to be a factor, he asked who had time restraints. I did, and I was soon seated in front of him.

He first drew out his small bottle of oil, anointed my forehead and then asked me to extend my hands. With my hands together, he placed his hands around mine and began to pray.

Experiencing awesomeness

All during this time I was becoming more and more aware of being involved in a potential meeting with the Lord, and while I was not afraid, I began to experience the awesomeness of that possibility. My heart began to rev up.

Ed was sitting next to me and I felt the same thing happening to him. Suddenly I stopped doubting that anything like this could happen, and the thought and desire for healing swept over me. I confess that I urgently waited on the Lord for deliverance from the deterioration of my hands.

The healing prayer was uttered with resonant conviction. I've forgotten most of it, but the essence of it will linger with me forever. "I command you, Satan, to come out of our brother."

Those words hit me like cold water. I thought, "Satan doesn't have anything to do with my ailment. I am suffering from excessive amounts of radiation to my spinal area, causing the nerves to my arms to be traumatized."

Had I forgotten to tell him why my hands were so miserable and weak?

When the prayer was over, he asked me if I had experienced any healing.

When I indicated I had not, he said that there could be a delayed response, which somehow did not leave me with much hope. I thanked him for his ministry on my behalf and wished him the Lord's blessing, which he wished us in return, and we went home.

Now nearly a half year later my hands and arms have slowly become more numb and "miseryed."

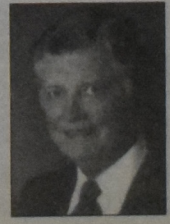
Grave doubts

My views on faith healing and healing ministries have not changed much. I am not so infallible as to suggest it is all smoke and mirrors, though much of it is. That there may be those who are healed I would have to grant, since I do not have the evidence to disprove such claims.

I have grave doubts about all the healing in the context of North American Christianity. I don't think it is in the Lord's good providence for us who have so much in the way of modern medical care. And we must die of something!

However, on the frontiers of the mission enterprise of the church, where the gospel comes face to face with the entrenched power of the demons, I have no doubt that the Lord does authenticate the gospel with such demonstrations of his power.

Should we as a culture sink ever deeper into the reality of the demons it could be that the working of miracles may once again be at the disposal of the preacher to show forth the power of God and the gospel. We as believers do not need that, and we likely should not seek it. Let us rather live faithfully with the Lord's providence day by day, praying for his grace to give us strength of faith and hope for eternity.



Ty Hofman is a Yankee-Canuck and retired minister of the Christian Reformed Church who lives in Grand Rapids, Mich.

We could really use your investment now.

CRC EXTENSION FUND

"...serving Christian Reformed churches and Christian schools since 1970"

Your funds will be invested in Christian Reformed Church and Christian school building projects in Canada.

RATES TO MARCH 31, 2003.

Ext. fund: we pay 4.0%

RRSP: you earn approx. 4.4%

Call: 416-461-1207

Write: Christian Reformed Extension Fund
45 Harriet St., Toronto, ON M4L 2G1

Fax: 416-465-6367

Valentine Travel
Martinair

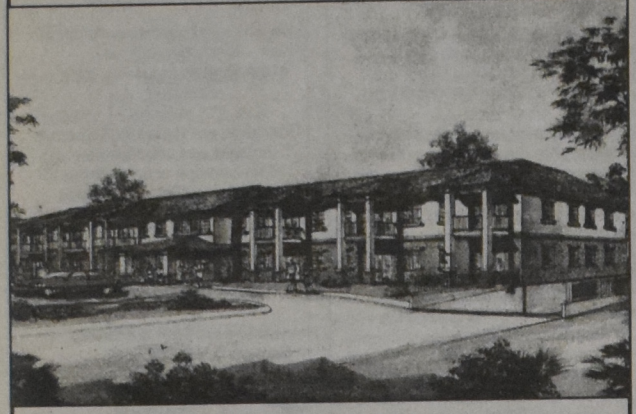
Special TORONTO – AMSTERDAM
Rates from $499.00

Call us for ticket details.
and ask about the free
car rental upgrade

201 City Centre Dr. Suite 501 Mississauga, ON L5B 2T4
905-890-5333 or 1-800-268-6144

Advertising/Business Directory

Quinte Christian Retirement Homes Inc.
Presents



"HILLCREST TERRACE"

A "Life Lease" Senior Residential Complex

Situated at 20 Fourth Ave., **Trenton, Ontario**
(next to Ebenezer CRC)

Price Range: $ 122,000.00 - $169,500.00
1 & 2 bedroom units available
Parking Garage or Outdoor Parking Option
Occupancy slated for Sept. 1, 2003

For more information:

Call 613-392-1818 (John Van Huizen)

Tollendale Village

A Christian Retirement Community located in Barrie, Ontario

Reservations for Apartments are now being accepted for Occupancy in summer 2004

Tollendale Village is a planned Interdenominational Christian Retirement Community located on 14 acres of prime residential land adjacent to an extensive City Owned natural park and close to numerous other recreational facilities, including the waterfront. Phase 1 and 2, consisting of a total of 20 semi-detached homes and 132 one and two bedroom apartments were completed in 2000 and 2002 respectively and are fully occupied. We are currently constructing our next Phase consisting of another 132 apartments and our Village Square. The Village Square will house a 450 seat chapel, 100 seat Dining room, a convenience store and many other amenities. Also being constructed is an addition to our underground parking garage. Construction started in October 2002 and is expected to be completed in the summer of 2004. We are currently about 70 % reserved, and there are still a large variety of apartments available.

For more information please visit our comprehensive Website at www.tollendalevillage.ca or call us at our office at 705-722-0469 (8:30AM to 5:00 PM Mon – Fri.)

DCA Travel & Cruise
♦Holiday Packages ♦Cruises ♦Flights
ON SALE
TORONTO 416-224-5211
BRADFORD 905-775-6763
Toll-free 1-800-667-2525
E-mail: info@dca-travel.com
Best insurance coverage-lowest price

ADA REALTY LTD.
2011-137 Ave., Suite 404
Edmonton, AB
T5A 4W2
780-473-8149
Sid Vandermeulen
Contact us first when you think of moving to Edmonton and district.
Home of confidence

EXPAND YOUR BUSINESS HORIZONS
You can advertise in *Christian Courier*'s Business and Service Directory once a month for only: $25 + GST. Call: 1-800-969-4838 for details.

BUSINESS AND SERVICE DIRECTORY

BENJAMINS Realty Inc
Jake Benjamins
Broker/Owner
Office: 519-575-9092
Fax: 519-485-1533
jake@benjamins.com
Serving Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge area for 23 years. www.jakebenjamins.com

BAKKER
BARRISTER & SOLICITOR
570 Welland Avenue
St. Catharines ON L2M 5V6
905-688-9352
Albert J Bakker

MEESTER INSURANCE
Smithville, ON
Phone:
905-957-2333
or
1-800-465-8256
AGRI-BUSINESS MEESTER INSURANCE BROKERS SPECIALIST
www.meesterinsurance.com

Richard Haalboom
Q.C., B.A., LL.B.
BARRISTER SOLICITOR NOTARY
7 Duke West, Suite 302
Kitchener, ON N2H 6N7
Phone: **519-579-2920**
Fax: 519-576-0471

MERRITT FUNERAL HOME
287 Station St.
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0
Serving Families for 4 Generations
Directors:
Gove C. Merritt & Thomas C Merritt
905-957-7031 FSAC

Electric Power Tool Service Saw Blade Sharpening
Supplier of Quality Woodworking Machines
ART'S TOOL SALES & SERVICE Ltd.
10 Nihan Dr.
St. Catharines, ON
L2N 1L1
905-646-0728
We service what we sell
Art Van Krimpen

Jerry's Auto Body (Beamsville) Inc.
Serving Beamsville and area since 1969
Complete Collision Repairs
Quality Refinishing
Jerry Gerritsen 5529 Regional Rd. #81
Alan Gerritsen Beamsville ON L0R 1B3
Phone/Fax: 905-563-7702

Winter Bookkeeping & Tax Service
4184 Mountain St. PO Box 844
Beamsville, ON. L0R 1B0
Ph: 905-563-4471
Fax: 905-563-4696
Email:
wbts@sympatico.ca

Arie Hoogerbrugge
Associate Broker
RE/MAX Del MarRealty Inc.
840 Queenston Rd.
Stoney Creek
ON L8G 4A8
Bus: 905-662-5300
Fax:905-664-2300

Glendale Motors
407 Wilson St. Ancaster
Just west of Mohawk on Hwy. #2
We supply propane
Rob Brouwer
Doug Kloet
905-648-4113
Adrian Kloet (owner)

GRANTHAM TV CENTRE
Celebrating 44 years of SALES and SERVICE
KEN and GARY VAN DYK
TELEVISION - AUDIO - VIDEO
DVD -SATELLITE DISHES
P.A. SYSTEMS - ANTENNAS
391 Vine St. 905-934-9952
St. Catharines, Ont. 905-934-9964

Digital Art & Graphics INC.
578 Upper James St. Hamilton, ON L9C 2Y6
For all your printing needs
Call **Brian** or **Kathie Bezemer** at:
1-800-247-0155 or 905-574-0822
Visit:www.digitalartandgraphics.com

Classifieds

Classifieds

SUBMITTING YOUR AD
Mail: *Christian Courier*
1 Hiscott St.
St. Catharines, ON L2R 1C7
fax: 905-682-8313
Email: accounts@christiancourier.ca

Personals

Are you a Christian gentleman looking for a relationship with a fun-loving, family oriented woman? I am a 44 year old divorced (for 9 years) mom of three kids ages 17, 19 & 21. I'm looking for someone to share a new phase in life now that the kids are getting older. If you are a sincere, trustworthy and loving man who would enjoy spending time getting to know someone new for potential relationship, please reply to:
File #2738 1 Hiscott St.
St. Catharines, ON L2R 1 C7

Widow lady, 65 + would like to meet a sincere Christian man.
Reply to: **File #2721 1 Hiscott St.**
St. Catharines ON L2R 1C7

Birth Announcement

The Lord has blessed us with our very first VanTuyl cousin!

Isaac Arie Van Tuyl
was born on Saturday, March 15 at 2:31 p.m. weighing 8 lbs. and 6 ozs.
He will live next door to Opa and Oma Van Tuyl with his Daddy and Mommy (James and Jane Van Tuyl) at 722 Lincoln Street, P.O. Box 43, Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0.
Welcome to the family, Isaac, from all your cousins!
Derek, Desireé, Nicolas, Nathan,
Victoria, Christina, and Elizabeth Schreuders
Luke, Joseph, Jacob, and Kurtis Zantingh

Birthday

Hoofddorp, Netherlands — North York, Ontario
1908 April 21 2003

"...He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Ps. 91:2

With thanksgiving and praise to God for His faithfulness, we hope to celebrate the 95th birthday of our mother,

Wilhelmina Van Gent-Tensen

Happy 95th birthday,
mom, oma and great-oma!
We wish you God's continued care and blessings for today and always.
With all our love,
Your grateful children and spouses, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

You are invited to share our joy at an open house reception in her honor to be held D.V. Saturday, April 19, 2003, from 2 - 4 p.m. Willowdale Chr. Ref. Church, 70 Hilda Av. Willowdale, Ont.
Best wishes only.
Home Address:
76 Goulding Ave.
Willowdale ON M2M 1L2

A DUTCH SERVICE will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Ref. Church
April 20 at 3 p.m.
Rev. G. Procee Preaching

Anniversaries

1943 April 28 2003

"I lift up my eyes to the hills -
where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth."
Psalm 121:1,2

With joy and thanksgiving to God for his faithfulness, we hope to celebrate D.V. the 60th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents

CLARENCE and SUSAN SINKGRAVEN

May God continue to bless and keep you! Congratulations, with love from:
Mike & Lucy Sinkgraven
Lisa & Rob (Austin, Seth), Michelle
Mike & Helen Gilbert
Mike & Laura, Chris, David
Andy & Janet Elgersma
Steve & Michelle,
Chris & Marcia (Rebekah),
Dave & Sandra,
Steph, Trish
Rick & Ruth Sinkgraven,
Josh, Dave, Daniel, Rachel
Bert & Janet Sinkgraven,
Heather, Mark

To celebrate this blessed event, an Open House will be held on Saturday, May 3, 2003, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. at Zion United Reformed Church of Sheffield, Ontario.
Home Address: 26 Azores Cres.
Cambridge ON N1R 7Z4

On Saturday, April 26, 2003,
we hope, the Lord willing,
to celebrate with

JOHN and JANNY BERGMAN

The occasion of their
50th Wedding Anniversary

We praise and thank the Lord for
His faithfulness to them.
Thank you for your love
and encouragement.
With love, your family.
Open House 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. at
John Knox Christian School,
Woodstock (Hwy 401 and 59)
Home Address:
110 Beale Street, Apt 217,
Woodstock ON N4S 6X5

"You will keep in perfect peace
him whose mind is steadfast,
because he trusts in you."
Isaiah 26:3

1953 April 22 2003

ORVAL and ANN OKKEMA
(nee DeJong)

We celebrate with our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, 50 years of marriage.
We praise God for His faithfulness displayed in their lives and for the blessing they are to us all.

Mark & Sue
Doran, Brynn, Arend
Tilda & Ed
Kevin,
Julianne & Devon and Semyra,
Steven, Arlene
Ray

"It is good to give thanks to the Lord."
Ps.92:1

Mailing address: 685 Woolwich St.
Apt. 1101, Guelph, ON N1H 8M6

1953 May 9 2003

We joyfully announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents

DIRK and TENA DYKSTRA

We pray that God will continue to bless and keep you in his care.
With love from your children and grandchildren
John & Anne Dykstra - *Kitchener*
John, Peter, Laura
Frank & Barbara Dykstra - *Brampton*
Heather, Kevin, Allison, Maureen
Alfred & Marcelle Dykstra - *Unionville*
Jordan, Lauren
Teresa & Gordon Bushby - *Ajax*
Tena
James Dykstra - *Banff*

There will be an open house at the Second Christian Reformed Church, 444 Steeles Ave. W. Brampton, May 3, 2003 from 3 - 5 p.m.
Best wishes only please.
Home Address: 11 McLaughlin Rd. N.
Brampton ON L6X 1Y4

Welland, Ont. — Burgessville, Ont.
1968 April 19 2003

The Lord has been faithful.
On Saturday, April 19th

BEN and ELLY VELD
(nee Goedbloed)

will celebrate their 35th anniversary, the Lord willing, with an open house.

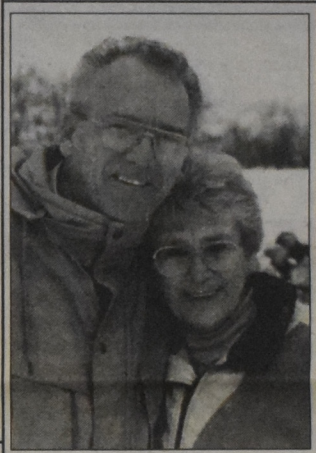
You are invited to come and share this joyous occasion with us, and our children and grandchildren, from 10-12 and 2 -5 at our home: Zeelandia B&B on Beaconsfield Rd. 405229.
Burgessville, Ontario N0J 1C0

1953 2003
Edmonton - Brampton

Proverbs 3:6
"In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make straight your path."

BERT and MELLINA KAMPHUIS

It is with thanksgiving to God that we celebrate the blessing of our parents 50th wedding anniversary.
God's rich blessings include their 5 children, their spouses and their 15 grandchildren.
An open house will be held on May 3 from 2-4 p.m. in Harmony Hall, Holland Christian Homes, Brampton.
Home address: 35 King Knoll Dr.
King Tower, 608
Brampton ON L6Y 5G5



1953 April 25 2003
Psalm 89:15

With praise and thankfulness to God, we joyfully announce the **50th wedding anniversary** of our parents

RICHARD and TRISH BOUWMA
(nee Buma)

Congratulations from your 5 children and their spouses, 23 grandchildren, and 9 great-grandchildren.
Everyone is welcome to celebrate with them at an open house on Saturday, April 26, from 3 - 5 p.m. at the Jarvis Christian Reformed Church on Highway 3. Best wishes only.
Home address:
Box 452, 7 Marley Cres.
Jarvis ON N0A 1J0

1953 April 22 2003

The Lord willing, we will celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary with our children, grand & great-grandchildren.

GERRIT-JAN and AALTJE BEENEN
(nee Bisschop)

We thank the Lord for his guidance over all these years and that he will lead us for years to come.
"The Lord will keep you from all evil -
he will keep your life;
The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in
from this time forth and forevermore."
Ps. 121:7,8.
Open house will be held from 2 - 5 p.m. on May 3, 2003 at Immanuel Christian School, 849 Rossland Road West, Oshawa, Ontario.
Home address: 26 Taunton Rd. W.
Oshawa ON L1G 3T2

Oppenhuizen, Fr. — Edmonton, AB
1953 April 23 2003

" He who dwells in the shelter of the
Most High will rest
in the shadow of the Almighty"
Psalm 91 : 1

Grateful to our Heavenly Father we would like to announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our Parents, Pake and Beppe

RAY and WILMA SCHRAA
(nee deGroot)
With love from their children and grandchildren.

Home address: 9307 82 Street
Edmonton, AB T6C 2X4

Obituaries

Bartlehiem, Friesland, The Neth — Peterborough, Ontario
On March 9, 2003, the Lord took home our dear brother-in-law and uncle

GERLOF TALSMA

at the age of 79.
The text he had chosen for the funeral was Romans 8:18
"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. "
This is also our comfort.
May God be near Alice and family.
A. Noordstra & family - *Bowmanville*
A. Brouwer & family - *Whitby*

Aug. 9, 1921 — Mar. 12, 2003
Zelhem, Gld. The Neth — Brampton, Ontario

DERSKEN H. B. JANSEN
(nee Wolsink)

Peacefully in her sleep, our heavenly father called home our mother and oma.
Her husband Willem R. Jansen predeceased her in the year 2000.
Loving mother of:
Henk & Lynda - *Newmarket, ON*
Debra, Rick, Lisa
John & Nell - *Maple, ON*
Sheryl & Doug Philip
Ken, Janice, Trish
Willie - Bradford, ON
Leah-Anna
Barrie (†1980)
Jacqueline & Mike Doyle
Richmond Hill, ON

A memorial service was held at Holland Christian Homes in Brampton, Ontario on March 15, 2003.
Correspondence address:
Mrs. Nellie Jansen, 10 Weller Cres.
Maple ON L6A 1E4

Church Event

Dutch Community Easter Song Service
on Sunday **April 20th** at 7:30 p.m. at the Emmanuel Reformed Church, 170 Clarke St. N. **Woodstock.** Rev. Roeland Hartmans officiating.
Babysitting provided.
Refreshments served after the service.
We Hope that You All Can Come!

Classifieds

Events

Congratulations to

PASTOR RON FISHER
who is retiring
after 34 years of faithful service
in the ministry.
Trenton Ebenezer C.R.C is
honoured to celebrate this
occasion on **May 4, 2003.**
Pastor Ron has served the
congregations of
Brooks, Alta.,
Transcona, Winnipeg,
Chatham and Whitby, Ontario.

Ebenezer wishes
Pastor Ron and Gerry the
Lord's blessings in the coming
years

The Calvin Christian Reformed Church of Ottawa, Ontario
will be celebrating
50 years
of God's grace and faithfulness on May 3 & 4, 2003. Weekend activities include a dinner, program and services of celebration.
All former members and friends are welcome.
For more information please contact the Church Office at
613- 225-2889 or
office@calvincrc.ca

The Christian Reformed Church
of **Medicine Hat, Alberta,**
will be celebrating its
50th anniversary on
May 17 & 18, 2003 D.V.
On Saturday, May 17th, there will be registration at 10 a.m. followed by a **banquet** at 1:30 p.m. in the Medicine Hat Christian School gymnasium located at 68 Rice Drive S.E. At 7:30 p.m. there will be a **program** at the Christian Reformed Church located at 300 Primrose Dr. S.E. On Sunday, May 18, we will have **special services** at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. at the church with former pastors participating.
All former members and friends are cordially invited to join us in our celebrations. Please RSVP. Those who plan to attend the Saturday banquet are asked to reply by April 27. Phone Ina at **403-526-5522** or email Bill: **wmslof@telusplanet.net**

Niagara Celebration Church Theatre Company presents
"The Beautiful Child"
A moving drama. Free admission. Only two performances: Friday, April 18 @ 7pm and Sunday, April 20 at 6:30 p.m. 310 Scott Street, **St Catharines.** 905-646-0970.

For Sale

Prosperous **50-year-old business** for sale. The store is located in Edmonton and specializes in Dutch goods, butcher shop, dry goods, giftware. Building also available to purchase. Interested parties contact:
WILLIAMS KRULL CA'S
17409 107 Ave., Suite 100
Edmonton AB T5S 1E5
Tot Zions

For Rent

St. Catharines - Share house with Christian young person. Ideal for students. Available May 1, 2003. On bus route and close to Fairview Mall. Call Anita at: 905-684-5806.

Needed someone to share house in **Guelph.** Christian young man, NS, ND. Available immediately. Call Brian at 519-822-4506 and leave a message.

Miscellaneous

The Living Word
Sermons for reading services.
Contact:
CRC
R. Vander Ploeg, Secr./Treas.
37 Brick Pond Lane
Woodstock, ON N4V 1G1
Phone: (519) 539-2117

Job Opportunities

WESTMOUNT CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH,
in beautiful **Strathroy**, Ontario
is searching for a **Director of Music (part time)**. We are praying and looking for a Director of Music who: is able to lead worship on a keyboard, is familiar with traditional hymns and contemporary songs, is willing to lead — be part of — a praise team and is comfortable in team ministry.
For more information,
please contact Renata Nydam, church office (245-2430)
Email address: wcrc@sympatico.ca
Mailing address: 405 Drury Lane, Strathroy, ON, N6G 3G2.

Help Seniors Enjoy Life!

Do you have planning and organizational skills?
Would you like to serve in a Christian environment?

Holland Christian Homes in Brampton
has an immediate opening for a **part-time assistant** to serve the recreational needs of seniors living in our five (soon to be six) apartment towers.
Your work will include planning special events, organizing bus trips and involving the community in our Home.
Currently, the position is two days per week with additional two days available in May.
For further information please contact
Jon Masselink at 905-459-3333
or email at **jonma@hch.ca.**

Looking forward to a long and healthy retirement? This Is It!

Spring into Action

NOW IS THE TIME TO RESERVE YOUR NEW HOME!
Select suites available from $150,900

APRIL 22ND GRAND OPENING!
CALL (905) 945-9208
www.EvergreenTerrace.ca
275 MAIN STREET EAST, GRIMSBY

DURHAM CHRISTIAN HOMES INC.

Invites applications for
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Organization:
Durham Christian Homes is committed to provide shelter, care and recreation for seniors allowing them to enjoy an active life within a Christian community. Operating 250 self contained seniors' apartments, many eligible for Rents Geared to Income, Durham Christian Homes Inc. is planning to expand through the addition of a long term care facility and more housing units at its present site in Whitby, Ontario.

Position Summary:
The Executive Director supervises the administration, organization and management of the housing component, including adherence to relevant government regulations. The Executive Director will develop program directions and policies for the existing housing. The position will be available by September 1, 2003 as understudy and as Executive Director by January 1, 2004.

The Individual:
- Committed to fulfilling the vision of the organization
- A degree in business administration with further education in the health or social work field, combined with 3-5 years in management experience
- Good understanding of Tenant Protection Act and familiarity of Long Term Care programs
- Excellent leadership, organizational, conflict resolution and problem solving skills
- Knowledge of the community served and the ability to interact with its members
- Strong verbal and written skills
- Relevant computer literacy

Compensation:
Salary is commensurate with qualifications, experience and position requirements

Please submit your resume by mail, fax or email by noon, May 20, 2003 to

Search Committee
Durham Christian Homes Inc.
100 Glen Hill Drive South
Whitby, Ontario L1N 8R4
Tel: (905) 430-1666; Fax: 905-430-1741 Email: dchomes@on.aibn.com

We appreciate all responses. However, only applicants chosen for an interview will be contacted.

Classifieds

Teachers

BOWMANVILLE, Ontario
Durham Christian High School
Positions in :
French and Art
School Year 2003/2004
Inquires to:
Mr. Fred Spoelstra, Principal
Durham Christian High School
340 Scugog St.
Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K2
Telephone: 905-623-5940
Fax: 905-623-6258
E-mail: principal@dchs.com

Job Opportunities

ASSOCIATE PASTOR
New Life Church,
a dynamic, cell-based, contemporary and multi-staff church in **Abbotsford, British Columbia**, is looking for a full-time associate pastor. Are you someone who loves to preach, who loves to equip others for leadership, and who loves people? If you are and you are able to function at a senior staff level in a team environment - then we want to hear from you!
Please send your enquiries &/or resume, to: **Elsie Bakker**
ebakker@newlife.crc.ca
or fax 604-852-1554

Half Time Ministries Coordinator – New position in **Classis Toronto**.

Classis Toronto is seeking a high energy, Spirit-driven leader. The coordinator will be responsible to work with local churches by promoting ministry opportunities. The successful applicant should have a passion for empowering the church, be a self-starter able to work within a flexible schedule, have web management skills and the ability to communicate effectively with congregations and ministry partners.
For further job description and submission of resume contact:
Rev. Nick Overduin,
Stated Clerk, at
416-938-9520 or email
nickoverdn@aol.com.
Deadline for resumes is June 15.

MARANATHA CHRISTIAN ACADEMY
in **Windsor, Ontario**,
a K-12 school, is accepting applications for a Resource position, French and Grade 2 Maternity.
Computer literate teachers who demonstrate a vibrant Christian walk are encouraged to apply.

Contact us to receive a Maranatha Application Form; then send the completed form & complete resume to:

William Van Dyke, Principal
Maranatha Christian Academy
939 Northwood St., Windsor, ON N9E 2B4
Phone: 519-966-7424 **Fax:** 519-966-9519
E-mail: office@maranathachristian.ca

JOHN KNOX CHRISTIAN SCHOOL OF BRAMPTON, ONTARIO,
founded in 1959, today has a staff of 22 serving a student body of over 300 from Junior Kindergarten to grade 8.
To find out more about our school please visit our web site at **www.bramptonjkcs.org**.

We currently have the following openings:
1. Maternity leave opening - Grade 5 (60%) and Library (20%) effective early May 2003 to end of school year.
2. Two Maternity leave positions for the 2003/2004 school year at the junior level. One of these positions will be an 80% position and may include 20% library responsibilities. A specialty in French would be an asset.
3. Possible openings at the primary, junior and senior level for the 2004 school year. We operate on a rotation basis in the senior grades. Specialties in French and/or Phys. Ed. would be an asset.

If you would like to pursue any of these positions, please forward your resume to Christine Van Noord, at **jkcvan@bramptonjkcs.org**, as soon as possible.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Langley Christian Middle/High School
(Grades 7 – 12 with 430+ students)
is accepting applications for **Principal**. Position begins Aug. 2004.

Relevant experience and a Master's Degree (or near completion) is required.

For more information go to **www.langleychristian.com** or contact
Rudy Ydenberg, Search Committee Chair
c/o 22702 – 48th Ave, Langley BC V2Z 2T6
604 533 0839

Job Opportunity

OTTAWA CALVARY

THIS IS OF CAPITAL IMPORTANCE:

CALVARY CRC OF OTTAWA-EAST is looking for a **Pastor.** Our church is located about 10 min. from Parliament Hill. We are a mix of rural and urban families, with a total of 424 members. Does your preaching and one-on-one interactions with people challenge them to grow spiritually, preparing them for outreach and a godly life? Are you a caring, pastoral person who visits the sick and others in need, and deals well with crisis situations? Are you effective in working with young people? Are you a good leader who encourages others to develop their gifts? If so, then **you may be exactly the person we need** as our new Pastor.
For a complete church profile or any other inquiries, please contact John Cook (phone: (613)745-5914; e-mail: johngcook@sprint.ca).

Miscellaneous

The Bible and Islam
by Rev. Bassam Madany
($5.95 Canada/ $4.95 U.S.)
How to relate the gospel relevantly to the Muslim heart and mind. Also available – essays on **understanding the Middle East**. ($1.50)
Write:
The Back to God Hour
P.O. Box 5070
Burlington, ON L2R 3Y8

Miscellaneous

re–
once more, again, anew, afresh
Generate!
energy, power, light, ideas
Generation
new life, new growth, new community
reGeneration!
The Campaign for ICS

INSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIAN STUDIES
Christian Graduate Education
www.icscanada.edu 1-866-979-9777

For Sale or Rent
DUNCAN CHRISTIAN SENIOR HOME SOCIETY
Unit #2 at Evening's Ease Court
1015 Trunk Road, **Duncan, B.C.**

2 BR, 1 ½ Bath, 991 sq. ft.
Asking $132,900. or $775./mo.
For more information visit website:
http://senior.hopto.org/seniorhome
Or telephone: Bill (250) 743-9276
George (250) 748-1257

Job Opportunities

Senior Pastor
The **First Christian Reformed Church of Chilliwack**, located 60 miles/ 100 kilometres east of Vancouver, BC, in the beautiful Fraser Valley, seeks a **Senior Pastor** for our congregation of 580 members. We pray that the Lord will provide a pastor who can, by solid biblical preaching and by example, help us toward our goal of "helping people to know and serve Jesus". Our Sunday services are changing gradually from traditional to more contemporary, with growing member participation. The Senior Pastor will have a significant voice in the calling of an associate pastor as we proceed with plans to develop an effective team ministry.
For a job description and a church profile please contact our Search Committee Chairman, **Norman Brouwer at 604-792-9380**
or e-mail: normbrouwer@hotmail.com

YOUTH DIRECTOR/PASTOR
The three Christian Reformed Churches of Sarnia, Ontario are seeking a **full time Youth Director/Pastor** to continue a unique and exciting combined youth ministry. Solid programming & commiteed volunteer leadership is already in place. Candidate must have strong relational and administrative skills plus the desire and ability to lead and equip our youth, helping them to grow in faith and service to our Lord.
Please send resume and inquiries to:
Art Capelle,
2261 Confederation Sarnia ON N7T-7H3
519-337-4660 or e-mail: artc@rivernet.net

Events/Advertising

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is $7.50 per line, or $1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

Apr 10,11,12	Students of **London** District Christian Secondary School present The Beams are Creaking, a historical drama based on the life of German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Time: 8 p.m. See ad Mar 31 issue.
Apr 12	Spring Concert of Praise by the Ontario Christian Music Assembly, Leendert Kooij director, Andre Knevel, organ; in the **Springdale** CRC @ 7:30. Tickets $10, Children under 12 – Free. Call (905) 775-2230.
Apr 20	A **Dutch Service** will be held in the **Ancaster** Chr Ref Church 3 p.m. Rev. G. Procee preaching
Apr 20	**Dutch Community Easter Song Service** 7:30 p.m. at the Emmanuel Reformed Church 170 Clarke St. N. **Woodstock,** Rev. Roeland Hartmans officiating. Babysitting & Refreshments. All welcome!
Apr 25	**27th Annual Ontario Christian High School Choral Festival**, choirs from Beacon, Chatham, Hamilton, London, Nepean, Toronto featured individually and as a Mass Choir. Centenary United Church, **Hamilton** (next to Hamilton Place).
Apr 26	Forest Christian Reformed Church in **Forest**, Ontario, will celebrate 50 years of blessings. Program will begin at 6:30 PM with Open House to follow. Dinner tickets are available. Call (519)786-4082.
Apr 26	Spring Concert of Praise by the Ontario Christian Music Assembly, Leendert Kooij director, Andre Knevel, organ; in the King St. United Church, **Trenton** @ 7:30 p.m. Tickets $10, Children under 12 – Free. Call (613)392-4110
Apr 26	Festival of Praise for Male Choirs. Redeemer University College Auditorium, **Ancaster**, ON. $15 per person. Ph: 905-389-2104
Apr 26	FESTIVAL OF PRAISE CONCERT at Temple Baptist Church, **Sarnia** 4 southwestern male choruses (west division) participating. Guest choir "Chatham –Kent male choir". Special music by "One Voice" from Sarnia Concert at 7:30 PM Tickets $10.00 for info Call Bill Boomsma 519 383 0805 or Henk Visser 519 542 9958
Apr 26	**Salem**, 40 years of service, evening of celebration & praise with Grace & Colleen, Unity Music Ministries 7 - 8:30 p.m. at Faith CRC, **Burlington**, Ont. See ad next issue for details.
Apr 26, 27	Zion Christian Reformed Church, **Pembroke**, Ont., 50th anniversary. Sat. - tea social, banquet, evening program. Sun. - thanksgiving service. Call (613) 582-3263 for info & banquet. See ad Mar.3 issue.
May2	Come and Enjoy the combined talents of the Ottawa-Carleton Male Choir, the Men of Note of Clinton and soprano: Renee Stalenhoefon Friday, 8 p.m. in the **Clinton** CRC: Admission: Adults $10, 12 & under $5. Proceeds to World Vision
May 3	Calvin Christian School, 547 West 5th St. **Hamilton**, Ont. Celebrating 50th anniversary. Open house at the school from 11a.m. – 3 p.m. Dinner at Michelangelo's Banquet Ctr. At 6:30 p.m. $40.00 pp. Social at 5:30. To order tickets, send names & cheque to Ena Mostert, 22 Ambassador Dr. Hamilton, ON L9C 2N8
May 3	Sarnia Christian School, **Sarnia**, Ont. 50th anniversary. 2-4 p.m. - open house. Dinner/program 5:30 Contact 519-383-7750 or odolphi@lkdsb.net See ad March 3 issue.
May 3	Liberation Choir Concert, Hamilton Place, **Hamilton** with Guelph Symphony Orchestra. 7:30 pm. See ad
May 3	PRO MUSICA CHOIR Conductor: Brent Fifield. Concert: Mozart's Coronation Mass, 8. p.m. Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church. 607 Dynes Rd. **Burlington** ON Special guests: Ensemble de L'Estocart, will sing settings of Genevan Psalms .Adults $12; Seniors/Students$10; Family $30 Add $2 at door. For Info call: 905 632 1347
May 3,4	First CRC, of **Orillia**, Ont. 50th Anniversary. For info & dinner tickets, call Andy Mast 705-484-9976 e-mail andrew.mast@sympatico.ca or Jackie Taylor 705-325-0161 See ad this issue.
May 3,4	The Calvin Christian Reformed Church of **Ottawa**, Ont. 50 year anniversary. Weekend activities include a dinner, program, services. For info: 613-225-2889 or email: office@calvincrc.ca See ad Mar 31 issue
May 10,11	Beth-El CRC 365 Queen St. E. **Acton**, Ontario, 50th anniversary. Sat. 3:00 p.m. for a Social Hour, then a banquet & evening program. Sunday – special thanksgiving service. For info: 519-853-0991 E-mail kenk@maple.ca (RSVP re Banquet) See ad this issue
May 16,17,18	The Maranatha Christian Reformed Church of **Edmonton**, Alberta, 50th anniversary For more info, visit our website: members.shaw.ca/maranatha_edmonton.50th/ For banquet tickets call Edie Boonstra at 780-477-8617 or email: maranatha_edmonton.50th @shaw.ca
May 17,18	The CRC, **Medicine Hat, AB**, 50th anniversary. Saturday, registration at 10 a.m., banquet at 1:30 p.m & a program at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, special services at 10 a.m. & 6 p.m. Ph: 403-526-5522 or email Bill: wmslof@telusplanet.net

10TH ANNIVERSARY

LIBERATION CHOIR CONCERT

Conductor: Willem van Suijdam

With the

Guelph Symphony Orchestra

Conductor: Simon Irving

Organ & Grand Piano: Andre Knevel

Soprano Soloist: Colleen Greidanus

SATURDAY MAY 3, 2003 - 7:30 P.M.

at

Hamilton Place, Hamilton, Ontario

For tickets call: *905-631-1929*

Or e-mail: paula@organs.ca

Tickets: $25.00 / $35.00

Tickets also available at the door.

25th Anniversary Celebration

WATERLOO CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

is holding celebrations on Saturday, April 19th

W in honour of 25 years as a congregation.

C There will be an Open House from 1-4 p.m.

R and a Dinner and Program at 6 p.m.

C Tickets for the dinner are $20. per person.

All events are held at the Waterloo CRC "Church in the Woods" - 209 Bearinger Rd., Waterloo.

For more information or to order tickets call Nelda Looyenga 519-746-5727 or email office@wcrc.on.ca

SALEM

Christian Mental Health Association

40 years of service 1963-2003

Come Celebrate with us!

An evening of Celebration & Praise with

Grace & Colleen Unity Music Ministries

Saturday, April 26, 2003, 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

(Refreshments following)

Faith Christian Reformed Church

2265 Mountainside Drive, **Burlington**, ON

(West off Guelph Line just north of the 403)

Freewill offering for the Salem Fellowship Fund (receipts available for donations of $10 or more)

An Annual Tradition for 20 Years

Festival of Praise for Male Choirs

Hear 150 men sing!

7:30 PM – Saturday, April 26, 2003

Redeemer University College Auditorium

777 Garner Road E, Ancaster, ON

Ambassadors, Hamilton

The Choraliers, Brampton

Collegium Musicum, St. Catharines

The Crusaders, Springdale

Guelph Male Choir

COME AND BE INSPIRED!

Tickets $15.00 per person – ask your local choir members or call 905-389-2104

Check out *Christian Courier* online at: www.christiancourier.ca

Come and Enjoy the combined talents of the Ottawa-Carleton Male Choir, the Men of Note of Clinton and soprano: Renee Stalenhoef, on Friday, May 2 at 8 p.m. in the **Clinton** CRC

Admission: Adults $10

12 & under $5

Proceeds to World Vision

The **FIRST CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH** of **ORILLIA**, Ontario Canada will be celebrating their **50th Anniversary**.

A weekend of fellowship, fun, and thanksgiving is planned on **May 3** at 2 p.m. with dinner starting at 6 p.m.

All former and present members and friends are welcome to join us in this celebration.

For more information and dinner tickets,

call Andy Mast :705-484-9976, email: andrew.mast@sympatico.ca or Jackie Taylor: 705-325-0161, P.O. Box 291Orillia, ON L3V 3T9

News

Campaign calls government's attention to needs of poor children

Alan Doerksen

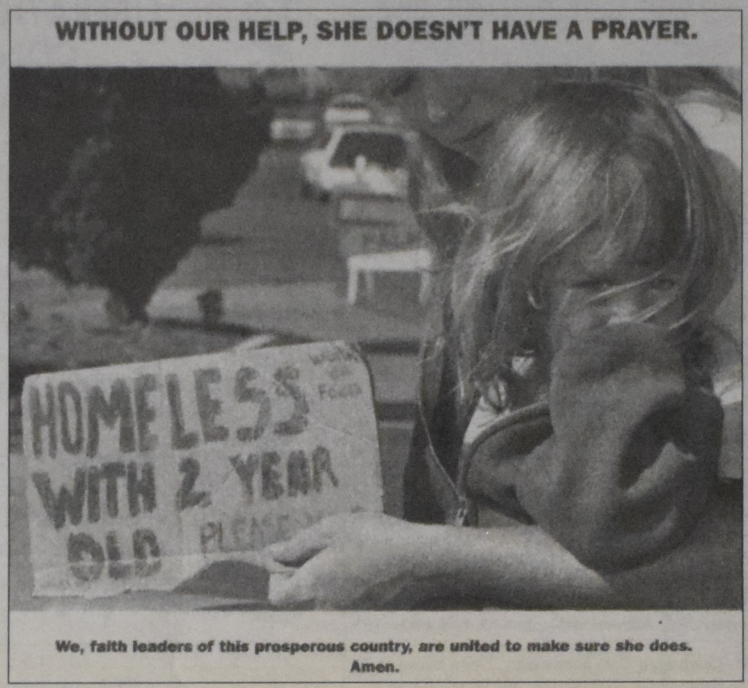
TORONTO – The Ontario government's latest budget has gotten much attention because of Premier Ernie Eves' decision to announce it from a television studio rather than from the legislature. But the Campaign Against Child Poverty (CACP) wants to make sure the government gives fair attention to the needs of poor children and their families in Ontario.

In late January, three representatives of CACP – Gerald Vandezande, Jacquie Maund and Walter Pitman – met with Ontario's Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs to suggest ways the government can improve life for those families living below the poverty line in the province. CACP describes itself, in a press release, as a non-partisan coalition of citizens from faith groups, social justice groups, child welfare organizations and businesses working to assist governments in a clear commitment to end child poverty.

Speaking to the committee in January, Maund – co-ordinator of CACP – said that although Ontario's economy is growing more quickly than any G7 nation, "the latest statistics indicate that in 2000 there were over 390,000 children in Ontario who were growing up below the Statistics Canada poverty line. . . . The minimum wage has not been increased since 1995, so if in fact one is working at minimum wage full-time, one is living below the poverty line."

More recent reports, from March 2002, show that 295,000 people were served by Ontario food banks in one year. "About 41 per cent of that number were children," asserted Maund.

Looking at the poverty situation across Canada, one out of every six children, or 16.5 per cent of all children in Canada live below the poverty line, says CACP — based on the latest (year 2000) data available from Statistics Canada and the Campaign 2000 Report Card on Child Poverty in Canada. The rate of child poverty in Canada increased by 39 per cent between 1989 and 1999. Forty per cent of food bank users (an estimated 305,000) in Canada are children, although only 26 per cent of Canada's population are children. The fastest growing population requiring emergency shelter in Canada is families with children.


WITHOUT OUR HELP, SHE DOESN'T HAVE A PRAYER.
HOMELESS
WITH 2 YEAR
OLD
We, faith leaders of this prosperous country, are united to make sure she does.
Amen.

One of Campaign Against Child Poverty's newspaper ads, highlighting the plight of poor children in Canada.

How to improve

To improve life for Ontario's poorer families, CACP has made three recommendations to the Ontario government:

• **Income Security**: Increase social assistance rates from their 1995 level and index the rate according to inflation. Ensure that the shelter allowance portion reflects the average cost of rental accommodation in Ontario. Stop the "clawback" of National Child Benefits for those on social assistance. Increase the minimum wage.

• **Affordable Housing**: Increase the availability of affordable housing by fully matching the federal government's $245 million commitment under the Affordable Housing Framework Agreement. Restore funding for new affordable social housing.

• **Early Childhood Education and Care**: Ensure that federal funding is passed on to address the urgent need for additional regulated, non-profit child care spaces. Sign onto the new national child care strategy currently under discussion with the federal government, and set a goal of spending one per cent of Gross Domestic Product on early childhood education and care services.

CACP is encouraged by the federal government's renewed commitment to address child poverty, as indicated in last September's Speech from the Throne: "The government will put in place a long-term investment plan to allow poor families to break out of the welfare trap. . . . It will again significantly increase the National Child Benefit for poor families and will work with its partners to increase access to early learning opportunities and to quality child care. . . . It will extend its investments in affordable housing for those whose needs are greatest."

Challenging Ontario

In reaction to that, CACP called on the Ontario government – in its presentation – "to similarly undertake a renewed commitment to address child and family poverty in this province with a long-term plan. . . ." CACP notes that the Ontario government "stopped involvement in housing provision in 1995, canceling 17,000 affordable units and cutting hundreds of millions of dollars in funding. Ontario has a persistent shortage of affordable housing."

CACP's Pitman sees the campaign's three recommendations as being like three legs of a stool. "If you don't take all three of these seriously, then the stool falls over," he told the standing committee. "It's a complex problem and it has to be dealt with in all its features."

Describing the plight of Ontario's poorest families, Pitman said, "It comes down to, 'Do we feed the kids or do we pay the rent? We can't do both.' In spite of the so-called flood of well-being that's gone on at the top, and all the expansion that has taken place over the last 10 years, very little has trickled down to these people at the very bottom."

Taking from the poor

Vandezande pointed out to the committee that millions of dollars in federal funding earmarked for the poor has gone missing. Federal funding on $114 million for the national child benefit program and $153 million for early childhood development "disappeared in the general treasury of the government. It wasn't used for the designated purpose."

Ontario is the only province which "claws back" the national child benefit, Vandezande pointed out. "It's the only one that takes the money from poor people and makes them still poorer."

Maund tells *Christian Courier* that CACP makes a presentation each year to the Ontario government, to provide facts about child poverty and to make recommendations. She observed that the standing committee paid close attention to CACP's presentation, and asked questions.

At press time, Maund and her colleagues had gotten no word from government about addressing CACP's recommendations in the latest budget. But she noted, "The budget is a very closed-shop business until it's released."

Critical of televised budget

Maund is critical of Premier Eves' decision to announce the budget from a television studio rather than from the legislature. "I don't see a reason for departure from tradition." She thinks this could be because of an upcoming election. In the past, some CACP representatives have been able to go to the Ontario legislature to respond before the media, but that will be different if the budget is presented on TV.

Maund and her colleagues are preparing for an election call, and plan to launch another in a series of newspaper advertising campaigns, focusing on the need to abolish child poverty.

News Digest

Sneaker of mass destruction

MONTPELIER, Vermont (AP) — An annual rotten sneaker contest included a little international competition when an entry came in from the crew of the USS Montpelier submarine.

The sneaker arrived double-bagged from an undisclosed location in the Persian Gulf where the submarine is currently deployed. But the shoe arrived with an unmistakable odor of fish.

Contestants are required to be under the age of 15, but contest organizers still gave the military shoe an honorary title of "most rotten sneaker."

"That's a weapon of mass destruction right there," said commentator Dave Moody, who moderated the 28th annual contest. The rotten sneaker contest began in 1975 as a way to help a local sporting goods store sell shoes.

Ten-year-old Jeffry Soto walked away with the contest's top prize: a $500 savings bond. However, he's not taking full credit for the sneakers. The fifth grader says his pit bull helped make his entry the winner. "I had a fight with my dog," said Soto, who lives in the Bronx, N.Y. "I was trying to get it away from him because he uses it as a chew toy."

Church bulletin bloopers

(Agapefest.com) – Here are some unintentionally funny church bulletin notices, taken from Agapefest.com: "Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get."

"The church will host an evening of fine dining, superb entertainment, and gracious hostility."

"The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to a conflict."

"Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Don't forget your husbands."

Announcement in the church bulletin for a National Prayer & Fasting Conference: "The cost for attending the Fasting and Prayer conference includes meals."

"Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community."

"Next Sunday, Mrs. Vinson will be the soloist for the morning service. The pastor will then speak on 'It's A Terrible Experience.'"